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THE

COLLECTED WORKS OF WILLIAM HAZLITT

IN TWELVE VOLUMES

VOLUME TWELVE

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*Grace Hazlitt.*
*Mother of William Hazlitt.*
*(1747–1837)*
*From an oil painting by John Hazlitt.*

THE COLLECTED WORKS OF

# WILLIAM HAZLITT

EDITED BY A. R. WALLER

AND ARNOLD GLOVER

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

W. E. HENLEY

## Fugitive Writings

1904

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# BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Of the essays in this volume some have already been published in *Literary Remains*, *Sketches and Essays*, or *Winterslow* (see Bibliographical Note to Vol. XI.), and the rest (with one exception) are now reprinted for the first time. The exception is 'The Sick Chamber' which was published by Mr. Ireland in his *William Hazlitt Essayist and Critic, Selections from his Writings*. Some of the essays now republished for the first time have been attributed to Hazlitt by Mr. W. C. Hazlitt (*Memoirs*, 1867, I. xxii-xxxii—Chronological Catalogue), or by Mr. Ireland (*List of the Writings of William Hazlitt and Leigh Hunt*); others have not before been identified. The Editors, however, have not included any essay as to Hazlitt's authorship of which any reasonable doubt can exist.

Reference may here be made to a few essays which, though they may have been written by Hazlitt, have been excluded from the present volume, because the evidence of their authorship was not sufficiently strong. They are arranged in the following list under the heading of the Magazine in which they first appeared.

I. In *The New Monthly Magazine*.

1. Four papers entitled 'The Confessional' (1822, vol. IV. pp. 349, 450; vol. V. pp. 54, 406) which read very much as if they were written by Hazlitt during the *Liber Amoris* period.
2. An essay entitled 'Social Grievances' (1822, vol. V. p. 412).
3. An essay on 'The Influence of Books on the Progress of Manners' (May, 1828, vol. XXII. p. 409).

II. In *The Liberal*.

1. In *The Liberal* (vol. II. 1823) appeared an essay entitled 'A Sunday's Fête at St. Cloud' which was reprinted (without mention being made of its source) under the title 'A Fête at St. Cloud' and attributed to Hazlitt in a volume of miscellanies called 'The Talisman; or Bouquet of Literature and the Fine Arts' (1831), edited by Mrs. Alaric A. Watts. The essay shows no trace of Hazlitt's handiwork, and seems to have been written 'under a foreign sky,' whereas Hazlitt did not start for his tour in France and Italy till after the publication of the essay in *The Liberal*. An editorial paragraph published in *The London Magazine* for October 1824, under the heading of 'The Lion's Head,' would seem to show that the writer of the sketch had sent it to that magazine for publication. '*The Fête of St. Cloud*' (the paragraph runs), 'though not unamusing, would not suit our pages. French subjects,

# FUGITIVE WRITINGS

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[1] This essay was apparently not published in *The Atlas*.

# FUGITIVE WRITINGS

## THE FIGHT

*The New Monthly Magazine.*] [*February*, 1822.

'——The *fight*, the *fight*'s the thing,
Wherein I 'll catch the conscience of the king.'

*Where there's a will, there's a way.*—I said so to myself, as I walked down Chancery-lane, about half-past six o'clock on Monday the 10th of December, to inquire at Jack Randall's where the fight the next day was to be; and I found 'the proverb' nothing 'musty' in the present instance. I was determined to see this fight, come what would, and see it I did, in great style. It was my *first fight*, yet it more than answered my expectations. Ladies! it is to you I dedicate this description; nor let it seem out of character for the fair to notice the exploits of the brave. Courage and modesty are the old English virtues; and may they never look cold and askance on one another! Think, ye fairest of the fair, loveliest of the lovely kind, ye practisers of soft enchantment, how many more ye kill with poisoned baits than ever fell in the ring; and listen with subdued air and without shuddering, to a tale tragic only in appearance, and sacred to the FANCY!

I was going down Chancery-lane, thinking to ask at Jack Randall's where the fight was to be, when looking through the glass-door of the *Hole in the Wall*, I heard a gentleman asking the same question *at* Mrs. Randall, as the author of Waverley would express it. Now Mrs. Randall stood answering the gentleman's question, with the authenticity of the lady of the Champion of the Light Weights. Thinks I, I 'll wait till this person comes out, and learn from him how it is. For to say a truth, I was not fond of going into this house of call for heroes and philosophers, ever since the owner of it (for Jack is no gentleman) threatened once upon a time to kick me out of doors for wanting a mutton-chop at his hospitable board, when the conqueror in thirteen battles was more full of *blue ruin* than of good manners. I was the more mortified at this repulse, inasmuch as I had heard Mr. James Simpkins, hosier in the Strand, one day

when the character of the *Hole in the Wall* was brought in question, observe—'The house is a very good house, and the company quite genteel: I have been there myself!' Remembering this unkind treatment of mine host, to which mine hostess was also a party, and not wishing to put her in unquiet thoughts at a time jubilant like the present, I waited at the door, when, who should issue forth but my friend Jo. Toms, and turning suddenly up Chancery-lane with that quick jerk and impatient stride which distinguishes a lover of the FANCY, I said, 'I'll be hanged if that fellow is not going to the fight, and is on his way to get me to go with him.' So it proved in effect, and we agreed to adjourn to my lodgings to discuss measures with that cordiality which makes old friends like new, and new friends like old, on great occasions. We are cold to others only when we are dull in ourselves, and have neither thoughts nor feelings to impart to them. Give a man a topic in his head, a throb of pleasure in his heart, and he will be glad to share it with the first person he meets. Toms and I, though we seldom meet, were an *alter idem* on this memorable occasion, and had not an idea that we did not candidly impart; and 'so carelessly did we fleet the time,' that I wish no better, when there is another fight, than to have him for a companion on my journey down, and to return with my friend Jack Pigott, talking of what was to happen or of what did happen, with a noble subject always at hand, and liberty to digress to others whenever they offered. Indeed, on my repeating the lines from Spenser in an involuntary fit of enthusiasm,

> 'What more felicity can fall to creature,
> Than to enjoy delight with liberty?'

my last-named ingenious friend stopped me by saying that this, translated into the vulgate, meant '*Going to see a fight.*'

Jo. Toms and I could not settle about the method of going down. He said there was a caravan, he understood, to start from Tom Belcher's at two, which would go there *right out* and back again the next day. Now I never travel all night, and said I should get a cast to Newbury by one of the mails. Jo. swore the thing was impossible, and I could only answer that I had made up my mind to it. In short, he seemed to me to waver, said he only came to see if I was going, had letters to write, a cause coming on the day after, and faintly said at parting (for I was bent on setting out that moment)—'Well, we meet at Philippi!' I made the best of my way to Piccadilly. The mail coach stand was bare. 'They are all gone,' said I—'this is always the way with me—in the instant I lose the future—if I had not stayed to pour out that last cup of tea, I should

have been just in time'—and cursing my folly and ill-luck together, without inquiring at the coach-office whether the mails were gone or not, I walked on in despite, and to punish my own dilatoriness and want of determination. At any rate, I would not turn back: I might get to Hounslow, or perhaps farther, to be on my road the next morning. I passed Hyde Park Corner (my Rubicon), and trusted to fortune. Suddenly I heard the clattering of a Brentford stage, and the fight rushed full upon my fancy. I argued (not unwisely) that even a Brentford coachman was better company than my own thoughts (such as they were just then), and at his invitation mounted the box with him. I immediately stated my case to him—namely, my quarrel with myself for missing the Bath or Bristol mail, and my determination to get on in consequence as well as I could, without any disparagement or insulting comparison between longer or shorter stages. It is a maxim with me that stage-coaches, and consequently stage-coachmen, are respectable in proportion to the distance they have to travel: so I said nothing on that subject to my Brentford friend. Any incipient tendency to an abstract proposition, or (as he might have construed it) to a personal reflection of this kind, was however nipped in the bud; for I had no sooner declared indignantly that I had missed the mails, than he flatly denied that they were gone along, and lo! at the instant three of them drove by in rapid, provoking, orderly succession, as if they would devour the ground before them. Here again I seemed in the contradictory situation of the man in Dryden who exclaims,

'I follow Fate, which does too hard pursue!'

If I had stopped to inquire at the White Horse Cellar, which would not have taken me a minute, I should now have been driving down the road in all the dignified unconcern and *ideal* perfection of mechanical conveyance. The Bath mail I had set my mind upon, and I had missed it, as I missed every thing else, by my own absurdity, in putting the will for the deed, and aiming at ends without employing means. 'Sir,' said he of the Brentford, 'the Bath mail will be up presently, my brother-in-law drives it, and I will engage to stop him if there is a place empty.' I almost doubted my good genius; but, sure enough, up it drove like lightning, and stopped directly at the call of the Brentford Jehu. I would not have believed this possible, but the brother-in-law of a mail-coach driver is himself no mean man. I was transferred without loss of time from the top of one coach to that of the other, desired the guard to pay my fare to the Brentford coachman for me as I had no change, was accommodated with a great coat, put up my umbrella to keep off a

drizzling mist, and we began to cut through the air like an arrow. The mile-stones disappeared one after another, the rain kept off; Tom Turtle, the trainer, sat before me on the coach-box, with whom I exchanged civilities as a gentleman going to the fight; the passion that had transported me an hour before was subdued to pensive regret and conjectural musing on the next day's battle; I was promised a place inside at Reading, and upon the whole, I thought myself a lucky fellow. Such is the force of imagination! On the outside of any other coach on the 10th of December, with a Scotch mist drizzling through the cloudy moonlight air, I should have been cold, comfortless, impatient, and, no doubt, wet through; but seated on the Royal mail, I felt warm and comfortable, the air did me good, the ride did me good, I was pleased with the progress we had made, and confident that all would go well through the journey. When I got inside at Reading, I found Turtle and a stout valetudinarian, whose costume bespoke him one of the FANCY, and who had risen from a three months' sick bed to get into the mail to see the fight. They were intimate, and we fell into a lively discourse. My friend the trainer was confined in his topics to fighting dogs and men, to bears and badgers; beyond this he was 'quite chap-fallen,' had not a word to throw at a dog, or indeed very wisely fell asleep, when any other game was started. The whole art of training (I, however, learnt from him,) consists in two things, exercise and abstinence, abstinence and exercise, repeated alternately and without end. A yolk of an egg with a spoonful of rum in it is the first thing in a morning, and then a walk of six miles till breakfast. This meal consists of a plentiful supply of tea and toast and beef-steaks. Then another six or seven miles till dinner-time, and another supply of solid beef or mutton with a pint of porter, and perhaps, at the utmost, a couple of glasses of sherry. Martin trains on water, but this increases his infirmity on another very dangerous side. The Gas-man takes now and then a chirping glass (under the rose) to console him, during a six weeks' probation, for the absence of Mrs. Hickman—an agreeable woman, with (I understand) a pretty fortune of two hundred pounds. How matter presses on me! What stubborn things are facts! How inexhaustible is nature and art! 'It is well,' as I once heard Mr. Richmond observe, 'to see a variety.' He was speaking of cock-fighting as an edifying spectacle. I cannot deny but that one learns more of what *is* (I do not say of what *ought to be*) in this desultory mode of practical study, than from reading the same book twice over, even though it should be a moral treatise. Where was I? I was sitting at dinner with the candidate for the honours of the ring, 'where good digestion

waits on appetite, and health on both.' Then follows an hour of social chat and native glee; and afterwards, to another breathing over heathy hill or dale. Back to supper, and then to bed, and up by six again—Our hero

> 'Follows so the ever-running sun
> With profitable *ardour*'—

to the day that brings him victory or defeat in the green fairy circle. Is not this life more sweet than mine? I was going to say; but I will not libel any life by comparing it to mine, which is (at the date of these presents) bitter as coloquintida and the dregs of aconitum!

The invalid in the Bath mail soared a pitch above the trainer, and did not sleep so sound, because he had 'more figures and more fantasies.' We talked the hours away merrily. He had faith in surgery, for he had had three ribs set right, that had been broken in a *turn-up* at Belcher's, but thought physicians old women, for they had no antidote in their catalogue for brandy. An indigestion is an excellent common-place for two people that never met before. By way of ingratiating myself, I told him the story of my doctor, who, on my earnestly representing to him that I thought his regimen had done me harm, assured me that the whole pharmacopeia contained nothing comparable to the prescription he had given me; and, as a proof of its undoubted efficacy, said, that, 'he had had one gentleman with my complaint under his hands for the last fifteen years.' This anecdote made my companion shake the rough sides of his three great coats with boisterous laughter; and Turtle, starting out of his sleep, swore he knew how the fight would go, for he had had a dream about it. Sure enough the rascal told us how the three first rounds went off, but 'his dream,' like others, 'denoted a foregone conclusion.' He knew his men. The moon now rose in silver state, and I ventured, with some hesitation, to point out this object of placid beauty, with the blue serene beyond, to the man of science, to which his ear he 'seriously inclined,' the more as it gave promise *d'un beau jour* for the morrow, and showed the ring undrenched by envious showers, arrayed in sunny smiles. Just then, all going on well, I thought on my friend Toms, whom I had left behind, and said innocently, 'There was a blockhead of a fellow I left in town, who said there was no possibility of getting down by the mail, and talked of going by a caravan from Belcher's at two in the morning, after he had written some letters.' 'Why,' said he of the lapells, 'I should not wonder if that was the very person we saw running about like mad from one coach-door to another, and asking if any

one had seen a friend of his, a gentlemen going to the fight, whom he had missed stupidly enough by staying to write a note.' 'Pray, Sir,' said my fellow-traveller, 'had he a plaid-cloak on?'—'Why, no,' said I, 'not at the time I left him, but he very well might afterwards, for he offered to lend me one.' The plaid-cloak and the letter decided the thing. Joe, sure enough, was in the Bristol mail, which preceded us by about fifty yards. This was droll enough. We had now but a few miles to our place of destination, and the first thing I did on alighting at Newbury, both coaches stopping at the same time, was to call out, 'Pray, is there a gentleman in that mail of the name of Toms?' 'No,' said Joe, borrowing something of the vein of Gilpin, 'for I have just got out.' 'Well!' says he, 'this is lucky; but you don't know how vexed I was to miss you; for,' added he, lowering his voice, 'do you know when I left you I went to Belcher's to ask about the caravan, and Mrs. Belcher said very obligingly, she couldn't tell about that, but there were two gentlemen who had taken places by the mail and were gone on in a landau, and she could frank us. It's a pity I didn't meet with you; we could then have got down for nothing. But *mum's the word.*' It's the devil for any one to tell me a secret, for it's sure to come out in print. I do not care so much to gratify a friend, but the public ear is too great a temptation to me.

Our present business was to get beds and a supper at an inn; but this was no easy task. The public-houses were full, and where you saw a light at a private house, and people poking their heads out of the casement to see what was going on, they instantly put them in and shut the window, the moment you seemed advancing with a suspicious overture for accommodation. Our guard and coachman thundered away at the outer gate of the Crown for some time without effect—such was the greater noise within;—and when the doors were unbarred, and we got admittance, we found a party assembled in the kitchen round a good hospitable fire, some sleeping, others drinking, others talking on politics and on the fight. A tall English yeoman (something like Matthews in the face, and quite as great a wag)—

'A lusty man to ben an abbot able,'—

was making such a prodigious noise about rent and taxes, and the price of corn now and formerly, that he had prevented us from being heard at the gate. The first thing I heard him say was to a shuffling fellow who wanted to be off a bet for a shilling glass of brandy and water—'Confound it, man, don't be *insipid*!' Thinks I, that is a good phrase. It was a good omen. He kept it up so all night,

nor flinched with the approach of morning. He was a fine fellow, with sense, wit, and spirit, a hearty body and a joyous mind, free-spoken, frank, convivial—one of that true English breed that went with Harry the Fifth to the siege of Harfleur—'standing like greyhounds in the slips,' &c. We ordered tea and eggs (beds were soon found to be out of the question) and this fellow's conversation was *sauce piquante*. It did one's heart good to see him brandish his oaken towel and to hear him talk. He made mince-meat of a drunken, stupid, red-faced, quarrelsome, *frowsy* farmer, whose nose 'he moralized into a thousand similes,' making it out a firebrand like Bardolph's. 'I 'll tell you what my friend,' says he, 'the landlady has only to keep you here to save fire and candle. If one was to touch your nose, it would go off like a piece of charcoal.' At this the other only grinned like an idiot, the sole variety in his purple face being his little peering grey eyes and yellow teeth; called for another glass, swore he would not stand it; and after many attempts to provoke his humourous antagonist to single combat, which the other turned off (after working him up to a ludicrous pitch of choler) with great adroitness, he fell quietly asleep with a glass of liquor in his hand, which he could not lift to his head. His laughing persecutor made a speech over him, and turning to the opposite side of the room, where they were all sleeping in the midst of this 'loud and furious fun,' said, 'There 's a scene, by G—d, for Hogarth to paint. I think he and Shakspeare were our two best men at copying life.' This confirmed me in my good opinion of him. Hogarth, Shakspeare, and Nature, were just enough for him (indeed for any man) to know. I said, 'You read Cobbett, don't you? At least,' says I, 'you talk just as well as he writes.' He seemed to doubt this. But I said, 'We have an hour to spare: if you 'll get pen, ink, and paper, and keep on talking, I 'll write down what you say; and if it doesn't make a capital 'Political Register,' I 'll forfeit my head. You have kept me alive to-night, however. I don't know what I should have done without you.' He did not dislike this view of the thing, nor my asking if he was not about the size of Jem Belcher; and told me soon afterwards, in the confidence of friendship, that 'the circumstance which had given him nearly the greatest concern in his life, was Cribb's beating Jem after he had lost his eye by racket-playing.'—The morning dawns; that dim but yet clear light appears, which weighs like solid bars of metal on the sleepless eyelids; the guests drop down from their chambers one by one—but it was too late to think of going to bed now (the clock was on the stroke of seven), we had nothing for it but to find a barber's (the pole that glittered in the morning sun lighted us to his

shop), and then a nine miles' march to Hungerford. The day was fine, the sky was blue, the mists were retiring from the marshy ground, the path was tolerably dry, the sitting-up all night had not done us much harm—at least the cause was good; we talked of this and that with amicable difference, roving and sipping of many subjects, but still invariably we returned to the fight. At length, a mile to the left of Hungerford, on a gentle eminence, we saw the ring surrounded by covered carts, gigs, and carriages, of which hundreds had passed us on the road; Toms gave a youthful shout, and we hastened down a narrow lane to the scene of action.

Reader, have you ever seen a fight? If not, you have a pleasure to come, at least if it is a fight like that between the Gas-man and Bill Neate. The crowd was very great when we arrived on the spot; open carriages were coming up, with streamers flying and music playing, and the country-people were pouring in over hedge and ditch in all directions, to see their hero beat or be beaten. The odds were still on Gas, but only about five to four. Gully had been down to try Neate, and had backed him considerably, which was a damper to the sanguine confidence of the adverse party. About two hundred thousand pounds were pending. The Gas says, he has lost 3000*l.* which were promised him by different gentlemen if he had won. He had presumed too much on himself, which had made others presume on him. This spirited and formidable young fellow seems to have taken for his motto the old maxim, that 'there are three things necessary to success in life—*Impudence! Impudence! Impudence!*' It is so in matters of opinion, but not in the *Fancy*, which is the most practical of all things, though even here confidence is half the battle, but only half. Our friend had vapoured and swaggered too much, as if he wanted to grin and bully his adversary out of the fight. 'Alas! the Bristol man was not so tamed!'—'This is *the grave-digger*' (would Tom Hickman exclaim in the moments of intoxication from gin and success, shewing his tremendous right hand), 'this will send many of them to their long homes; I haven't done with them yet!' Why should he—though he had licked four of the best men within the hour, yet why should he threaten to inflict dishonourable chastisement on my old master Richmond, a veteran going off the stage, and who has borne his sable honours meekly? Magnanimity, my dear Tom, and bravery, should be inseparable. Or why should he go up to his antagonist, the first time he ever saw him at the Fives Court, and measuring him from head to foot with a glance of contempt, as Achilles surveyed Hector, say to him, 'What, are you Bill Neate? I'll knock more blood out of that great carcase of thine, this day fortnight, than you ever knock'd out of a bullock's!' It was not

manly, 'twas not fighter-like. If he was sure of the victory (as he was not), the less said about it the better. Modesty should accompany the *Fancy* as its shadow. The best men were always the best behaved. Jem Belcher, the Game Chicken (before whom the Gas-man could not have lived) were civil, silent men. So is Cribb, so is Tom Belcher, the most elegant of sparrers, and not a man for every one to take by the nose. I enlarged on this topic in the mail (while Turtle was asleep), and said very wisely (as I thought) that impertinence was a part of no profession. A boxer was bound to beat his man, but not to thrust his fist, either actually or by implication, in every one's face. Even a highwayman, in the way of trade, may blow out your brains, but if he uses foul language at the same time, I should say he was no gentleman. A boxer, I would infer, need not be a blackguard or a coxcomb, more than another. Perhaps I press this point too much on a fallen man—Mr. Thomas Hickman has by this time learnt that first of all lessons, 'That man was made to mourn.' He has lost nothing by the late fight but his presumption; and that every man may do as well without! By an over-display of this quality, however, the public had been prejudiced against him, and the *knowing-ones* were taken in. Few but those who had bet on him wished Gas to win. With my own prepossessions on the subject, the result of the 11th of December appeared to me as fine a piece of poetical justice as I had ever witnessed. The difference of weight between the two combatants (14 stone to 12) was nothing to the sporting men. Great, heavy, clumsy, long-armed Bill Neate kicked the beam in the scale of the Gas-man's vanity. The amateurs were frightened at his big words, and thought that they would make up for the difference of six feet and five feet nine. Truly, the Fancy are not men of imagination. They judge of what has been, and cannot conceive of any thing that is to be. The Gas-man had won hitherto; therefore he must beat a man half as big again as himself—and that to a certainty. Besides, there are as many feuds, factions, prejudices, pedantic notions in the Fancy as in the state or in the schools. Mr. Gully is almost the only cool, sensible man among them, who exercises an unbiassed discretion, and is not a slave to his passions in these matters. But enough of reflections, and to our tale. The day, as I have said, was fine for a December morning. The grass was wet, and the ground miry, and ploughed up with multitudinous feet, except that, within the ring itself, there was a spot of virgin-green closed in and unprofaned by vulgar tread, that shone with dazzling brightness in the mid-day sun. For it was now noon, and we had an hour to wait. This is the trying time. It is then the heart sickens, as you think what the two champions are about, and how short a time

will determine their fate. After the first blow is struck, there is no opportunity for nervous apprehensions; you are swallowed up in the immediate interest of the scene—but

> 'Between the acting of a dreadful thing
> And the first motion, all the interim is
> Like a phantasma, or a hideous dream.'

I found it so as I felt the sun's rays clinging to my back, and saw the white wintry clouds sink below the verge of the horizon. 'So, I thought, my fairest hopes have faded from my sight!—so will the Gas-man's glory, or that of his adversary, vanish in an hour.' The *swells* were parading in their white box-coats, the outer ring was cleared with some bruises on the heads and shins of the rustic assembly (for the *cockneys* had been distanced by the sixty-six miles); the time drew near, I had got a good stand; a bustle, a buzz, ran through the crowd, and from the opposite side entered Neate, between his second and bottle-holder. He rolled along, swathed in his loose great coat, his knock-knees bending under his huge bulk; and, with a modest cheerful air, threw his hat into the ring. He then just looked round, and began quietly to undress; when from the other side there was a similar rush and an opening made, and the Gas-man came forward with a conscious air of anticipated triumph, too much like the cock-of-the walk. He strutted about more than became a hero, sucked oranges with a supercilious air, and threw away the skin with a toss of his head, and went up and looked at Neate, which was an act of supererogation. The only sensible thing he did was, as he strode away from the modern Ajax, to fling out his arms, as if he wanted to try whether they would do their work that day. By this time they had stripped, and presented a strong contrast in appearance. If Neate was like Ajax, 'with Atlantean shoulders, fit to bear' the pugilistic reputation of all Bristol, Hickman might be compared to Diomed, light, vigorous, elastic, and his back glistened in the sun, as he moved about, like a panther's hide. There was now a dead pause—attention was awe-struck. Who at that moment, big with a great event, did not draw his breath short—did not feel his heart throb? All was ready. They tossed up for the sun, and the Gas-man won. They were led up to the *scratch*—shook hands, and went at it.

In the first round every one thought it was all over. After making play a short time, the Gas-man flew at his adversary like a tiger, struck five blows in as many seconds, three first, and then following him as he staggered back, two more, right and left, and down he fell, a mighty ruin. There was a shout, and I said, 'There

is no standing this.' Neate seemed like a lifeless lump of flesh and bone, round which the Gas-man's blows played with the rapidity of electricity or lightning, and you imagined he would only be lifted up to be knocked down again. It was as if Hickman held a sword or a fire in that right hand of his, and directed it against an unarmed body. They met again, and Neate seemed, not cowed, but particularly cautious. I saw his teeth clenched together and his brows knit close against the sun. He held out both his arms at full length straight before him, like two sledge-hammers, and raised his left an inch or two higher. The Gas-man could not get over this guard—they struck mutually and fell, but without advantage on either side. It was the same in the next round; but the balance of power was thus restored—the fate of the battle was suspended. No one could tell how it would end. This was the only moment in which opinion was divided; for, in the next, the Gas-man aiming a mortal blow at his adversary's neck, with his right hand, and failing from the length he had to reach, the other returned it with his left at full swing, planted a tremendous blow on his cheek-bone and eyebrow, and made a red ruin of that side of his face. The Gas-man went down, and there was another shout—a roar of triumph as the waves of fortune rolled tumultuously from side to side. This was a settler. Hickman got up, and 'grinned horrible a ghastly smile,' yet he was evidently dashed in his opinion of himself; it was the first time he had ever been so punished; all one side of his face was perfect scarlet, and his right eye was closed in dingy blackness, as he advanced to the fight, less confident, but still determined. After one or two rounds, not receiving another such remembrancer, he rallied and went at it with his former impetuosity. But in vain. His strength had been weakened,—his blows could not tell at such a distance,—he was obliged to fling himself at his adversary, and could not strike from his feet; and almost as regularly as he flew at him with his right hand, Neate warded the blow, or drew back out of its reach, and felled him with the return of his left. There was little cautious sparring—no half-hits—no tapping and trifling, none of the *petit-maitreship* of the art—they were almost all knock-down blows:—the fight was a good stand-up fight. The wonder was the half-minute time. If there had been a minute or more allowed between each round, it would have been intelligible how they should by degrees recover strength and resolution; but to see two men smashed to the ground, smeared with gore, stunned, senseless, the breath beaten out of their bodies; and then, before you recover from the shock, to see them rise up with new strength and courage, stand steady to inflict or receive mortal offence, and rush upon each other 'like two clouds

over the Caspian'—this is the most astonishing thing of all:—this is the high and heroic state of man! From this time forward the event became more certain every round; and about the twelfth it seemed as if it must have been over. Hickman generally stood with his back to me; but in the scuffle, he had changed positions, and Neate just then made a tremendous lunge at him, and hit him full in the face. It was doubtful whether he would fall backwards or forwards; he hung suspended for a second or two, and then fell back, throwing his hands in the air, and with his face lifted up to the sky. I never saw any thing more terrific than his aspect just before he fell. All traces of life, of natural expression, were gone from him. His face was like a human skull, a death's head, spouting blood. The eyes were filled with blood, the nose streamed with blood, the mouth gaped blood. He was not like an actual man, but like a preternatural, spectral appearance, or like one of the figures in Dante's *Inferno*. Yet he fought on after this for several rounds, still striking the first desperate blow, and Neate standing on the defensive, and using the same cautious guard to the last, as if he had still all his work to do; and it was not till the Gas-man was so stunned in the seventeenth or eighteenth round, that his senses forsook him, and he could not come to time, that the battle was declared over.[1] Ye who despise the Fancy, do something to shew as much *pluck*, or as much self-possession as this, before you assume a superiority which you have never given a single proof of by any one action in the whole course of your lives!—When the Gas-man came to himself, the first words he uttered were, 'Where am I? What is the matter?' 'Nothing is the matter, Tom,—you have lost the battle, but you are the bravest man alive.' And Jackson whispered to him, 'I am collecting a purse for you, Tom.'—Vain sounds, and unheard at that moment! Neate instantly went up and shook him cordially by the hand, and seeing some old acquaintance, began to flourish with his fists, calling out, 'Ah you always said I couldn't fight—What do you think now?' But all in good humour, and without any appearance of arrogance; only it was evident Bill Neate was pleased that he had won the fight. When it was over, I asked Cribb if he did not think it was a good one? He said, '*Pretty well!*' The carrier-pigeons now mounted into the air, and one of

[1] Scroggins said of the Gas-man, that he thought he was a man of that courage, that if his hands were cut off, he would still fight on with the stumps—like that of Widrington,—

> ——'In doleful dumps,
> Who, when his legs were smitten off
> Still fought upon his stumps.'

them flew with the news of her husband's victory to the bosom of Mrs. Neate. Alas, for Mrs. Hickman!

*Mais au revoir*, as Sir Fopling Flutter says. I went down with Toms; I returned with Jack Pigott, whom I met on the ground. Toms is a rattle brain; Pigott is a sentimentalist. Now, under favour, I am a sentimentalist too—therefore I say nothing, but that the interest of the excursion did not flag as I came back. Pigott and I marched along the causeway leading from Hungerford to Newbury, now observing the effect of a brilliant sun on the tawny meads or moss-coloured cottages, now exulting in the fight, now digressing to some topic of general and elegant literature. My friend was dressed in character for the occasion, or like one of the FANCY; that is, with a double portion of great coats, clogs, and overhauls: and just as we had agreed with a couple of country-lads to carry his superfluous wearing-apparel to the next town, we were overtaken by a return post-chaise, into which I got, Pigott preferring a seat on the bar. There were two strangers already in the chaise, and on their observing they supposed I had been to the fight, I said I had, and concluded they had done the same. They appeared, however, a little shy and sore on the subject; and it was not till after several hints dropped, and questions put, that it turned out that they had missed it. One of these friends had undertaken to drive the other there in his gig: they had set out, to make sure work, the day before at three in the afternoon. The owner of the one-horse vehicle scorned to ask his way, and drove right on to Bagshot, instead of turning off at Hounslow: there they stopped all night, and set off the next day across the country to Reading, from whence they took coach, and got down within a mile or two of Hungerford, just half an hour after the fight was over. This might be safely set down as one of the miseries of human life. We parted with these two gentlemen who had been to see the fight, but had returned as they went, at Wolhampton, where we were promised beds (an irresistible temptation, for Pigott had passed the preceding night at Hungerford as we had done at Newbury), and we turned into an old bow-windowed parlour with a carpet and a snug fire; and after devouring a quantity of tea, toast, and eggs, sat down to consider, during an hour of philosophic leisure, what we should have for supper. In the midst of an Epicurean deliberation between a roasted fowl and mutton chops with mashed potatoes, we were interrupted by an inroad of Goths and Vandals—*O procul este profani*—not real flash-men, but interlopers, noisy pretenders, butchers from Tothill-fields, brokers from Whitechapel, who called immediately for pipes and tobacco, hoping it would not be disagreeable to the gentlemen, and began to

insist that it was *a cross*. Pigott withdrew from the smoke and noise into another room, and left me to dispute the point with them for a couple of hours *sans intermission* by the dial. The next morning we rose refreshed; and on observing that Jack had a pocket volume in his hand, in which he read in the intervals of our discourse, I inquired what it was, and learned to my particular satisfaction that it was a volume of the New Eloise. Ladies, after this, will you contend that a love for the FANCY is incompatible with the cultivation of sentiment?—We jogged on as before, my friend setting me up in a genteel drab great coat and green silk handkerchief (which I must say became me exceedingly), and after stretching our legs for a few miles, and seeing Jack Randall, Ned Turner, and Scroggins, pass on the top of one of the Bath coaches, we engaged with the driver of the second to take us to London for the usual fee. I got inside, and found three other passengers. One of them was an old gentleman with an aquiline nose, powdered hair, and a pigtail, and who looked as if he had played many a rubber at the Bath rooms. I said to myself, he is very like Mr. Windham; I wish he would enter into conversation, that I might hear what fine observations would come from those finely-turned features. However, nothing passed, till, stopping to dine at Reading, some inquiry was made by the company about the fight, and I gave (as the reader may believe) an eloquent and animated description of it. When we got into the coach again, the old gentleman, after a graceful exordium, said, he had, when a boy, been to a fight between the famous Broughton and George Stevenson, who was called the *Fighting Coachman*, in the year 1770, with the late Mr. Windham. This beginning flattered the spirit of prophecy within me and rivetted my attention. He went on—'George Stevenson was coachman to a friend of my father's. He was an old man when I saw him some years afterwards. He took hold of his own arm and said, "there was muscle here once, but now it is no more than this young gentleman's." He added, "well, no matter; I have been here long, I am willing to go hence, and I hope I have done no more harm than another man." Once,' said my unknown companion, 'I asked him if he had ever beat Broughton? He said Yes; that he had fought with him three times, and the last time he fairly beat him, though the world did not allow it. "I'll tell you how it was, master. When the seconds lifted us up in the last round, we were so exhausted that neither of us could stand, and we fell upon one another, and as Master Broughton fell uppermost, the mob gave it in his favour, and he was said to have won the battle. But," says he, "the fact was, that as his second (John Cuthbert) lifted him up, he said to him, 'I'll fight no more, I've had enough;'

"which," says Stevenson, "you know gave me the victory. And to prove to you that this was the case, when John Cuthbert was on his death-bed, and they asked him if there was any thing on his mind which he wished to confess, he answered, 'Yes, that there was one thing he wished to set right, for that certainly Master Stevenson won that last fight with Master Broughton; for he whispered him as he lifted him up in the last round of all, that he had had enough.'"' 'This,' said the Bath gentleman, 'was a bit of human nature;' and I have written this account of the fight on purpose that it might not be lost to the world. He also stated as a proof of the candour of mind in this class of men, that Stevenson acknowledged that Broughton could have beat him in his best day; but that he (Broughton) was getting old in their last rencounter. When we stopped in Piccadilly, I wanted to ask the gentleman some questions about the late Mr. Windham, but had not courage. I got out, resigned my coat and green silk handkerchief to Pigott (loth to part with these ornaments of life), and walked home in high spirits.

P.S. Toms called upon me the next day, to ask me if I did not think the fight was a complete thing? I said I thought it was. I hope he will relish my account of it.

## MERRY ENGLAND

*The New Monthly Magazine.*] [*December*, 1825.

'St. George for merry England!'

This old-fashioned epithet might be supposed to have been bestowed ironically, or on the old principle—*Ut lucus a non lucendo*. Yet there is something in the sound that hits the fancy, and a sort of truth beyond appearances. To be sure, it is from a dull, homely ground that the gleams of mirth and jollity break out; but the streaks of light that tinge the evening sky are not the less striking on that account. The beams of the morning-sun shining on the lonely glades, or through the idle branches of the tangled forest, the leisure, the freedom, 'the pleasure of going and coming without knowing where,' the troops of wild deer, the sports of the chase, and other rustic gambols, were sufficient to justify the well-known appellation of 'Merry Sherwood,' and in like manner, we may apply the phrase to *Merry England*. The smile is not the less sincere because it does not always play upon the cheek; and the jest is not the less welcome, nor the laugh less hearty, because they happen to be a relief from care or leaden-eyed melancholy. The instances are the more precious as they are rare;

and we look forward to them with the greater good will, or back upon them with the greater gratitude, as we drain the last drop in the cup with particular relish. If not always gay or in good spirits, we are glad when any occasion draws us out of our natural gloom, and disposed to make the most of it. We may say with *Silence* in the play, 'I have been merry once ere now,'—and this once was to serve him all his life; for he was a person of wonderful silence and gravity, though 'he chirped over his cups,' and announced with characteristic glee that 'there were pippins and cheese to come.' *Silence* was in this sense a merry man, that is, he would be merry if he could, and a very great economy of wit, like very slender fare, was a banquet to him, from the simplicity of his taste and habits. 'Continents,' says Hobbes, 'have most of what they contain'—and in this view it may be contended that the English are the merriest people in the world, since they only show it on high-days and holidays. They are then like a school-boy let loose from school, or like a dog that has slipped his collar. They are not gay like the French, who are one eternal smile of self-complacency, tortured into affectation, or spun into languid indifference, nor are they voluptuous and immersed in sensual indolence, like the Italians; but they have that sort of intermittent, fitful, irregular gaiety, which is neither worn out by habit, nor deadened by passion, but is sought with avidity as it takes the mind by surprise, is startled by a sense of oddity and incongruity, indulges its wayward humours or lively impulses, with perfect freedom and lightness of heart, and seizes occasion by the forelock, that it may return to serious business with more cheerfulness, and have something to beguile the hours of thought or sadness. I do not see how there can be high spirits without low ones; and every thing has its price according to circumstances. Perhaps we have to pay a heavier tax on pleasure, than some others: what skills it, so long as our good spirits and good hearts enable us to bear it?

'They' (the English), says Froissart, 'amused themselves sadly after the fashion of their country'—*ils se rejouissoient tristement selon la coutume de leur pays*. They have indeed a way of their own. Their mirth is a relaxation from gravity, a challenge to dull care to be gone; and one is not always clear at first, whether the appeal is successful. The cloud may still hang on the brow; the ice may not thaw at once. To help them out in their new character is an act of charity. Any thing short of hanging or drowning is something to begin with. They do not enter into their amusements the less doggedly because they may plague others. They like a thing the better for hitting them a rap on the knuckles, for making their blood tingle. They do not dance or sing, but they make good cheer—'eat,

drink, and are merry.' No people are fonder of field-sports, Christmas gambols, or practical jests. Blindman's-buff, hunt-the-slipper, hot-cockles, and snap-dragon, are all approved English games, full of laughable surprises and 'hair-breadth 'scapes,' and serve to amuse the winter fire-side after the roast-beef and plum-pudding, the spiced ale and roasted crab, thrown (hissing-hot) into the foaming tankard. Punch (not the liquor, but the puppet) is not, I fear, of English origin; but there is no place, I take it, where he finds himself more at home or meets a more joyous welcome, where he collects greater crowds at the corners of streets, where he opens the eyes or distends the cheeks wider, or where the bangs and blows, the uncouth gestures, ridiculous anger and screaming voice of the chief performer excite more boundless merriment or louder bursts of laughter among all ranks and sorts of people. An English theatre is the very throne of pantomime; nor do I believe that the gallery and boxes of Drury-lane or Covent-garden filled on the proper occasions with holiday folks (big or little) yield the palm for undisguised, tumultuous, inextinguishable laughter to any spot in Europe. I do not speak of the refinement of the mirth (this is no fastidious speculation) but of its cordiality, on the return of these long looked-for and licensed periods; and I may add here, by way of illustration, that the English common people are a sort of grown children, spoiled and sulky perhaps, but full of glee and merriment, when their attention is drawn off by some sudden and striking object. The May-pole is almost gone out of fashion among us: but May-day, besides its flowering hawthorns and its pearly dews, has still its boasted exhibition of painted chimney-sweepers and their Jack-o'-the-Green, whose tawdry finery, bedizened faces, unwonted gestures, and short-lived pleasures call forth good-humoured smiles and looks of sympathy in the spectators. There is no place where trap-ball, fives, prison-base, foot-ball, quoits, bowls are better understood or more successfully practised; and the very names of a cricket bat and ball make English fingers tingle. What happy days must 'Long Robinson' have passed in getting ready his wickets and mending his bats, who when two of the fingers of his right-hand were struck off by the violence of a ball, had a screw fastened to it to hold the bat, and with the other hand still sent the ball thundering against the boards that bounded *Old Lord's cricket-ground*! What delightful hours must have been his in looking forward to the matches that were to come, in recounting the feats he had performed in those that were past! I have myself whiled away whole mornings in seeing him strike the ball (like a countryman mowing with a scythe) to the farthest extremity of the smooth, level, sun-burnt ground, and with long, awkward strides count the notches that made victory sure!

Then again, cudgel-playing, quarter-staff, bull and badger-baiting, cock-fighting are almost the peculiar diversions of this island, and often objected to us as barbarous and cruel; horse-racing is the delight and the ruin of numbers; and the noble science of boxing is all our own. Foreigners can scarcely understand how we can squeeze pleasure out of this pastime; the luxury of hard blows given or received; the joy of the ring; nor the perseverance of the combatants.[1] The English also excel, or are not excelled in wiring a hare, in stalking a deer, in shooting, fishing, and hunting. England to this day boasts her Robin Hood and his merry men, that stout archer and outlaw, and patron-saint of the sporting-calendar. What a cheerful sound is that of the hunters, issuing from the autumnal wood and sweeping over hill and dale!

——'A cry more tuneable
Was never halloo'd to by hound or horn.'

What sparkling richness in the scarlet coats of the riders, what a glittering confusion in the pack, what spirit in the horses, what eagerness in the followers on foot, as they disperse over the plain, or force their way over hedge and ditch! Surely, the coloured prints and pictures of these, hung up in gentlemen's halls and village alehouses, however humble as works of art, have more life and health and spirit in them, and mark the pith and nerve of the national character more creditably than the mawkish, sentimental, affected designs of Theseus

[1] 'The gentle and free passage of arms at Ashby' was, we are told, so called by the Chroniclers of the time, on account of the feats of horsemanship and the quantity of knightly blood that was shed. This last circumstance was perhaps necessary to qualify it with the epithet of 'gentle,' in the opinion of some of these historians. I think the reason why the English are the bravest nation on earth is, that the thought of blood or a delight in cruelty is not the chief excitement with them. Where it is, there is necessarily a *reaction*; for though it may add to our eagerness and savage ferocity in inflicting wounds, it does not enable us to endure them with greater patience. The English are led to the attack or sustain it equally well, because they fight as they box, not out of malice, but to show *pluck* and manhood. *Fair play and old England for ever!* This is the only bravery that will stand the test. There is the same determination and spirit shown in resistance as in attack; but not the same pleasure in getting a cut with a sabre as in giving one. There is, therefore, always a certain degree of effeminacy mixed up with any approach to cruelty, since both have their source in the same principle, *viz.* an over-valuing of pain. (*a*) This was the reason the French (having the best cause and the best general in the world) ran away at Waterloo, because they were inflamed, furious, drunk with the blood of their enemies, but when it came to their turn, wanting the same stimulus, they were panic-struck, and their hearts and their senses failed them all at once.

(*a*) Vanity is the same half-witted principle, compared with pride. It leaves men in the lurch when it is most needed; is mortified at being reduced to stand on the defensive, and relinquishes the field to its more surly antagonist.

and Pirithous, and Æneas and Dido, pasted on foreign *salons à manger*, and the interior of country-houses. If our tastes are not epic, nor our pretensions lofty, they are simple and our own; and we may possibly enjoy our native rural sports, and the rude remembrances of them, with the truer relish on this account, that they are suited to us and we to them. The English nation, too, are naturally 'brothers of the angle.' This pursuit implies just that mixture of patience and pastime, of vacancy and thoughtfulness, of idleness and business, of pleasure and of pain, which is suited to the genius of an Englishman, and as I suspect, of no one else in the same degree. He is eminently gifted to stand in the situation assigned by Dr. Johnson to the angler, 'at one end of a rod with a worm at the other.' I should suppose no language can show such a book as an often-mentioned one, 'Walton's Complete Angler,'—so full of *naïveté*, of unaffected sprightliness, of busy trifling, of dainty songs, of refreshing brooks, of shady arbours, of happy thoughts and of the herb called *Heart's Ease*! Some persons can see neither the wit nor wisdom of this genuine volume, as if a book as well as a man might not have a personal character belonging to it, amiable, venerable from the spirit of joy and thorough goodness it manifests, independently of acute remarks or scientific discoveries: others object to the cruelty of Walton's theory and practice of trout-fishing—for my part, I should as soon charge an infant with cruelty for killing a fly, and I feel the same sort of pleasure in reading his book as I should have done in the company of this happy, child-like old man, watching his ruddy cheek, his laughing eye, the kindness of his heart, and the dexterity of his hand in seizing his finny prey! It must be confessed, there is often an odd sort of *materiality* in English sports and recreations. I have known several persons, whose existence consisted wholly in manual exercises, and all whose enjoyments lay at their finger-ends. Their greatest happiness was in cutting a stick, in mending a cabbage-net, in digging a hole in the ground, in hitting a mark, turning a lathe, or in something else of the same kind, at which they had a certain *knack*. Well is it when we can amuse ourselves with such trifles and without injury to others! This class of character, which the Spectator has immortalised in the person of Will Wimble, is still common among younger brothers and gentlemen of retired incomes in town or country. The *Cockney* character is of our English growth, as this intimates a feverish fidgety delight in rural sights and sounds, and a longing wish, after the turmoil and confinement of a city-life, to transport one's-self to the freedom and breathing sweetness of a country retreat. London is half suburbs. The suburbs of Paris are a desert; and you see nothing but crazy wind-mills, stone-walls, and a few straggling visitants in

spots where in England you would find a thousand villas, a thousand terraces crowned with their own delights, or be stunned with the noise of bowling-greens and tea-gardens, or stifled with the fumes of tobacco mingling with fragrant shrubs, or the clouds of dust raised by half the population of the metropolis panting and toiling in search of a mouthful of fresh air. The Parisian is, perhaps, as well (or better) contented with himself wherever he is, stewed in his shop or his garret; the Londoner is miserable in these circumstances, and glad to escape from them.[1] Let no one object to the gloomy appearance of a London Sunday, compared with a Parisian one. It is a part of our politics and our religion: we would not have James the First's 'Book of Sports' thrust down our throats: and besides, it is a part of our character to do one thing at a time, and not to be dancing a jig and on our knees in the same breath. It is true the Englishman spends his Sunday evening at the ale-house—

> ——'And e'en on Sunday
> Drank with Kirton Jean till Monday'—

but he only unbends and waxes mellow by degrees, and sits soaking till he can neither sit, stand, nor go: it is his vice, and a beastly one it is, but not a proof of any inherent distaste to mirth or good-fellowship. Neither can foreigners throw the carnival in our teeth with any effect: those who have seen it (at Florence, for example), will say that it is duller than any thing in England. Our Bartholomew-Fair is Queen Mab herself to it! What can be duller than a parcel of masks moving about the streets and looking as grave and monotonous as possible from day to day, and with the same lifeless formality in their limbs and gestures as in their features? One might as well expect variety and spirit in a procession of waxwork. We must be hard run indeed, when we have recourse to a pasteboard proxy to set off our mirth: a mask may be a very good cover for licentiousness (though of that I saw no signs), but it is a very bad exponent of wit and humour. I should suppose there is more drollery and unction in the caricatures in Gilray's shop-window, than in all the masks in Italy, without exception.[2]

The humour of English writing and description has often been wondered at; and it flows from the same source as the merry

[1] The English are fond of change of scene; the French of change of posture; the Italians like to sit still and do nothing.

[2] Bells are peculiar to England. They jingle them in Italy during the carnival as boys do with us at Shrovetide; but they have no notion of ringing them. The sound of village bells never cheers you in travelling, nor have you the lute or cittern in their stead. The expression of 'Merry Bells' is a favourite and not one of the least appropriate in our language.

*traits* of our character. A degree of barbarism and rusticity seems necessary to the perfection of humour. The droll and laughable depend on peculiarity and incongruity of character. But with the progress of refinement, the peculiarities of individuals and of classes wear out or lose their sharp, abrupt edges; nay, a certain slowness and dulness of understanding is required to be struck with odd and unaccountable appearances, for which a greater facility of apprehension can sooner assign an explanation that breaks the force of the seeming absurdity, and to which a wider scope of imagination is more easily reconciled. Clowns and country people are more amused, are more disposed to laugh and make sport of the dress of strangers, because from their ignorance the surprise is greater, and they cannot conceive any thing to be natural or proper to which they are unused. Without a given portion of hardness and repulsiveness of feeling the ludicrous cannot well exist. Wonder, and curiosity, the attributes of inexperience, enter greatly into its composition. Now it appears to me that the English are (or were) just at that mean point between intelligence and obtuseness, which must produce the most abundant and happiest crop of humour. Absurdity and singularity glide over the French mind without jarring or jostling with it; or they evaporate in levity:—with the Italians they are lost in indolence or pleasure. The ludicrous takes hold of the English imagination, and clings to it with all its ramifications. We resent any difference or peculiarity of appearance at first, and yet, having not much malice at our hearts, we are glad to turn it into a jest—we are liable to be offended, and as willing to be pleased—struck with oddity from not knowing what to make of it, we wonder and burst out a laughing at the eccentricity of others, while we follow our own bent from wilfulness or simplicity, and thus afford them, in our turn, matter for the indulgence of the comic vein. It is possible that a greater refinement of manners may give birth to finer distinctions of satire and a nicer tact for the ridiculous: but our insular situation and character are, I should say, most likely to foster, as they have in fact fostered, the greatest quantity of natural and striking humour, in spite of our plodding tenaciousness, and want both of gaiety and quickness of perception. A set of raw recruits with their awkward movements and unbending joints are laughable enough: but they cease to be so, when they have once been drilled into discipline and uniformity. So it is with nations that lose their angular points and grotesque qualities with education and intercourse: but it is in a mixed state of manners that comic humour chiefly flourishes, for, in order that the drollery may not be lost, we must have spectators of the passing scene who are able to appreciate and embody its most remarkable

features,—wits as well as *butts* for ridicule. I shall mention two names in this department, which may serve to redeem the national character from absolute dulness and solemn pretence,—Fielding and Hogarth. These were thorough specimens of true English humour; yet both were grave men. In reality, too high a pitch of animal spirits runs away with the imagination, instead of helping it to reach the goal; is inclined to take the jest for granted when it ought to work it out with patient and marked touches, and it ends in vapid flippancy and impertinence. Among our neighbours on the Continent, Moliere and Rabelais carried the freedom of wit and humour to an almost incredible height; but they rather belonged to the old French school, and even approach and exceed the English licence and extravagance of conception. I do not consider Congreve's wit (though it belongs to us) as coming under the article here spoken of; for his genius is any thing but *merry*. Lord Byron was in the habit of railing at the spirit of our good old comedy, and of abusing Shakspeare's Clowns and Fools, which he said the refinement of the French and Italian stage would not endure, and which only our grossness and puerile taste could tolerate. In this I agree with him; and it is *pat* to my purpose. I flatter myself that we are almost the only people left who understand and relish *nonsense*. We are not 'merry and wise,' but indulge our mirth to excess and folly. When we trifle, we trifle in good earnest; and having once relaxed our hold of the helm, drift idly down the stream, and delighted with the change are tossed about 'by every little breath' of whim or caprice,

'That under Heaven is blown.'

All we then want is to proclaim a truce with reason, and to be pleased with as little expense of thought or pretension to wisdom as possible. This licensed fooling is carried to its very utmost length in Shakspeare, and in some other of our elder dramatists, without, perhaps, sufficient warrant or the same excuse. Nothing can justify this extreme relaxation but extreme tension. Shakspeare's trifling does indeed tread upon the very borders of vacancy: his meaning often hangs by the very slenderest threads. For this he might be blamed if it did not take away our breath to follow his eagle flights, or if he did not at other times make the cordage of our hearts crack. After our heads ache with thinking, it is fair to play the fool. The clowns were as proper an appendage to the gravity of our antique literature, as fools and dwarfs were to the stately dignity of courts and noble houses in former days. Of all people, they have the best right to claim a total exemption from rules and rigid formality, who, when they have any thing of importance to do, set about it with the

greatest earnestness and perseverance, and are generally grave and sober to a proverb.[1] Poor Swift, who wrote more idle or *nonsense* verses than any man, was the severest of moralists; and his feelings and observations morbidly acute. Did not Lord Byron himself follow up his Childe Harold with his Don Juan?—not that I insist on what he did as an illustration of the English character. He was one of the English Nobility, not one of the English People; and his occasional ease and familiarity were in my mind equally constrained and affected, whether in relation to the pretensions of his rank or the efforts of his genius.

They ask you in France, how you pass your time in England without amusements; and can with difficulty believe that there are theatres in London, still less that they are larger and handsomer than those in Paris. That we should have comic actors, 'they own, surprises them.' They judge of the English character in the lump as one great jolter-head, containing all the stupidity of the country, as the large ball at the top of the Dispensary in Warwick-lane, from its resemblance to a gilded pill, has been made to represent the whole pharmacopœia and professional quackery of the kingdom. They have no more notion, for instance, how we should have such an actor as Liston on our stage, than if we were to tell them we have parts performed by a sea-otter; nor if they were to see him, would they be much the wiser, or know what to think of his unaccountable twitches of countenance or non-descript gestures, of his teeth chattering in his head, his eyes that seem dropping from their sockets, his nose that is tickled by a jest as by a feather and shining with self-complacency as if oiled, his ignorant conceit, his gaping stupor, his lumpish vivacity in Lubin Log or Tony Lumpkin; for as our rivals do not wind up the machine to such a determined intensity of purpose, neither have they any idea of its running down to such degrees of imbecility and folly, or coming to an absolute *stand-still* and lack of meaning, nor can they enter into or be amused with the contrast. No people ever laugh heartily who can give a reason for their doing so: and I believe the English in general are not yet in this predicament. They are not metaphysical, but very much in a state of nature; and this is one main ground why I give them credit for being merry, notwithstanding appearances. Their mirth is not the mirth of vice or desperation, but of innocence and a native wildness. They do not cavil or boggle at niceties, and not merely come to the edge of a joke, but break their necks over it with a wanton 'Here goes,' where others make a *pirouette* and stand upon decorum. The

[1] The strict formality of French serious writing is resorted to as a foil to the natural levity of their character.

French cannot, however, be persuaded of the excellence of our comic stage, nor of the store we set by it. When they ask what amusements we have, it is plain they can never have heard of Mrs. Jordan, nor King, nor Bannister, nor Suett, nor Munden, nor Lewis, nor little Simmons, nor Dodd, and Parsons, and Emery, and Miss Pope, and Miss Farren, and all those who even in my time have gladdened a nation and 'made life's business like a summer's dream.' Can I think of them, and of their names that glittered in the play-bills when I was young, exciting all the flutter of hope and expectation of seeing them in their favourite parts of Nell, or Little Pickle, or Touchstone, or Sir Peter Teazle, or Lenitive in the Prize, or Lingo, or Crabtree, or Nipperkin, or old Dornton, or Ranger, or the Copper Captain, or Lord Sands, or Filch, or Moses, or Sir Andrew Aguecheek, or Acres, or Elbow, or Hodge, or Flora, or the Duenna, or Lady Teazle, or Lady Grace, or of the gaiety that sparkled in all eyes, and the delight that overflowed all hearts, as they glanced before us in these parts,

'Throwing a gaudy shadow upon life,'—

and not feel my heart yearn within me, or couple the thoughts of England and the spleen together? Our cloud has at least its rainbow tints; ours is not one long polar night of cold and dulness, but we have the gleaming lights of fancy to amuse us, the household fires of truth and genius to warm us. We can go to a play and see Liston; or stay at home and read Roderick Random; or have Hogarth's prints of *Marriage à la Mode* hanging round our room. 'Tut! there 's livers even in England,' as well as 'out of it.' We are not quite the *forlorn hope* of humanity, the last of nations. The French look at us across the Channel, and seeing nothing but water and a cloudy mist, think that this is England.

——'What 's our Britain
In the world's volume? In a great pool a swan's nest.'

If they have any farther idea of us, it is of George III. and our Jack tars, the House of Lords and House of Commons, and this is no great addition to us. To go beyond this, to talk of arts and elegances as having taken up their abode here, or to say that Mrs. Abington was equal to Mademoiselle Mars, and that we at one time got up the 'School for Scandal,' as they do the 'Misanthrope,' is to persuade them that Iceland is a pleasant summer-retreat, or to recommend the whale-fishery as a classical amusement. The French are the *cockneys* of Europe, and have no idea how any one can exist out of Paris, or be alive without incessant grimace and *jabber*. Yet what

imports it? What! though the joyous train I have just enumerated were, perhaps, never heard of in the precincts of the Palais-Royal, is it not enough that they gave pleasure where they were, to those who saw and heard them? Must our laugh, to be sincere, have its echo on the other side of the water? Had not the French their favourites and their enjoyments at the time, that we knew nothing of? Why then should we not have ours (and boast of them too) without their leave? A monopoly of self-conceit is not a monopoly of all other advantages. The English, when they go abroad, do not take away the prejudice against them by their looks. We seem duller and sadder than we are. As I write this, I am sitting in the open air in a beautiful valley, near Vevey: Clarens is on my left, the Dent de Jamant is behind me, the rocks of Meillerie opposite: under my feet is a green bank, enamelled with white and purple flowers, in which a dew-drop here and there still glitters with pearly light—

'And gaudy butterflies flutter around.'

Intent upon the scene and upon the thoughts that stir within me, I conjure up the cheerful passages of my life, and a crowd of happy images appear before me. No one would see it in my looks—my eyes grow dull and fixed, and I seem rooted to the spot, as all this phantasmagoria passes in review before me, glancing a reflex lustre on the face of the world and nature. But the traces of pleasure, in my case, sink into an absorbent ground of thoughtful melancholy, and require to be brought out by time and circumstances, or (as the critics tell you) by the *varnish* of style!

The *comfort*, on which the English lay so much stress, is of the same character, and arises from the same source as their mirth. Both exist by contrast and a sort of contradiction. The English are certainly the most uncomfortable of all people in themselves, and therefore it is that they stand in need of every kind of comfort and accommodation. The least thing puts them out of their way, and therefore every thing must be in its place. They are mightily offended at disagreeable tastes and smells, and therefore they exact the utmost neatness and nicety. They are sensible of heat and cold, and therefore they cannot exist, unless every thing is snug and warm, or else open and airy, where they are. They must have 'all appliances and means to boot.' They are afraid of interruption and intrusion, and therefore they shut themselves up in in-door enjoyments and by their own firesides. It is not that they require luxuries (for that implies a high degree of epicurean indulgence and gratification), but they cannot do without *their comforts*; that is, whatever tends to supply their physical wants, and ward off physical pain and annoyance.

As they have not a fund of animal spirits and enjoyments in themselves, they cling to external objects for support, and derive solid satisfaction from the ideas of order, cleanliness, plenty, property, and domestic quiet, as they seek for diversion from odd accidents and grotesque surprises, and have the highest possible relish not of voluptuous softness, but of hard knocks and dry blows, as one means of ascertaining their personal identity.

## OF PERSONS ONE WOULD WISH TO HAVE SEEN

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'Come like shadows—so depart.'

B—— it was, I think, who suggested this subject, as well as the defence of Guy Faux, which I urged him to execute. As, however, he would undertake neither, I suppose I must do both—a task for which he would have been much fitter, no less from the temerity than the felicity of his pen—

'Never so sure our rapture to create
As when it touch'd the brink of all we hate.'

Compared with him I shall, I fear, make but a common-place piece of business of it; but I should be loth the idea was entirely lost, and besides I may avail myself of some hints of his in the progress of it. I am sometimes, I suspect, a better reporter of the ideas of other people than expounder of my own. I pursue the one too far into paradox or mysticism; the others I am not bound to follow farther than I like, or than seems fair and reasonable.

On the question being started, A—— said, 'I suppose the two first persons you would choose to see would be the two greatest names in English literature, Sir Isaac Newton and Mr. Locke?' In this A——, as usual, reckoned without his host. Every one burst out a laughing at the expression of B——'s face, in which impatience was restrained by courtesy. 'Yes, the greatest names,' he stammered out hastily, 'but they were not persons—not persons.' —'Not persons?' said A——, looking wise and foolish at the same time, afraid his triumph might be premature. 'That is,' rejoined B——, 'not characters, you know. By Mr. Locke and Sir Isaac Newton, you mean the Essay on the Human Understanding, and the *Principia*, which we have to this day. Beyond their contents there is nothing personally interesting in the men. But what we want to

see any one *bodily* for, is when there is something peculiar, striking in the individuals, more than we can learn from their writings, and yet are curious to know. I dare say Locke and Newton were very like Kneller's portraits of them. But who could paint Shakspeare?'—'Ay,' retorted A——, 'there it is; then I suppose you would prefer seeing him and Milton instead?'—'No,' said B——, 'neither. I have seen so much of Shakspeare on the stage and on book-stalls, in frontispieces and on mantle-pieces, that I am quite tired of the everlasting repetition: and as to Milton's face, the impressions that have come down to us of it I do not like; it is too starched and puritanical; and I should be afraid of losing some of the manna of his poetry in the leaven of his countenance and the precisian's band and gown.'—'I shall guess no more,' said A——. 'Who is it, then, you would like to see "in his habit as he lived," if you had your choice of the whole range of English literature?' B—— then named Sir Thomas Brown and Fulke Greville, the friend of Sir Philip Sidney, as the two worthies whom he should feel the greatest pleasure to encounter on the floor of his apartment in their night-gown and slippers, and to exchange friendly greeting with them. At this A—— laughed outright, and conceived B—— was jesting with him; but as no one followed his example, he thought there might be something in it, and waited for an explanation in a state of whimsical suspense. B—— then (as well as I can remember a conversation that passed twenty years ago—how time slips!) went on as follows. 'The reason why I pitch upon these two authors is, that their writings are riddles, and they themselves the most mysterious of personages. They resemble the soothsayers of old, who dealt in dark hints and doubtful oracles; and I should like to ask them the meaning of what no mortal but themselves, I should suppose, can fathom. There is Dr. Johnson, I have no curiosity, no strange uncertainty about him: he and Boswell together have pretty well let me into the secret of what passed through his mind. He and other writers like him are sufficiently explicit: my friends, whose repose I should be tempted to disturb, (were it in my power) are implicit, inextricable, inscrutable.

> "And call up him who left half-told
> The story of Cambuscan bold."

'When I look at that obscure but gorgeous prose-composition (the *Urn-burial*) I seem to myself to look into a deep abyss, at the bottom of which are hid pearls and rich treasure; or it is like a stately labyrinth of doubt and withering speculation, and I would invoke the spirit of the author to lead me through it. Besides, who would not

be curious to see the lineaments of a man who, having himself been twice married, wished that mankind were propagated like trees! As to Fulke Greville, he is like nothing but one of his own "Prologues spoken by the ghost of an old king of Ormus," a truly formidable and inviting personage: his style is apocalyptical, cabalistical, a knot worthy of such an apparition to untie; and for the unravelling a passage or two, I would stand the brunt of an encounter with so portentous a commentator!'—'I am afraid in that case,' said A——, 'that if the mystery were once cleared up, the merit might be lost;' —and turning to me, whispered a friendly apprehension, that while B—— continued to admire these old crabbed authors, he would never become a popular writer. Dr. Donne was mentioned as a writer of the same period, with a very interesting countenance, whose history was singular, and whose meaning was often quite as *uncomeatable*, without a personal citation from the dead, as that of any of his contemporaries. The volume was produced; and while some one was expatiating on the exquisite simplicity and beauty of the portrait prefixed to the old edition, A—— got hold of the poetry, and exclaiming 'What have we here?' read the following:—

'Here lies a She-Sun and a He-Moon there,
She gives the best light to his sphere,
Or each is both and all, and so
They unto one another nothing owe.'

There was no resisting this, till B——, seizing the volume, turned to the beautiful 'Lines to his Mistress,' dissuading her from accompanying him abroad, and read them with suffused features and a faltering tongue.

'By our first strange and fatal interview,
By all desires which thereof did ensue,
By our long starving hopes, by that remorse
Which my words' masculine persuasive force
Begot in thee, and by the memory
Of hurts, which spies and rivals threaten'd me,
I calmly beg. But by thy father's wrath,
By all pains which want and divorcement hath,
I conjure thee; and all the oaths which I
And thou have sworn to seal joint constancy
Here I unswear, and overswear them thus,
Thou shalt not love by ways so dangerous.
Temper, oh fair Love! love's impetuous rage,
Be my true mistress still, not my feign'd Page;
I'll go, and, by thy kind leave, leave behind
Thee, only worthy to nurse in my mind.

Thirst to come back; oh, if thou die before,
My soul from other lands to thee shall soar.
Thy (else Almighty) beauty cannot move
Rage from the seas, nor thy love teach them love,
Nor tame wild Boreas' harshness; thou hast read
How roughly he in pieces shiver'd
Fair Orithea, whom he swore he lov'd.
Fall ill or good, 'tis madness to have prov'd
Dangers unurg'd: Feed on this flattery,
That absent lovers one with th' other be.
Dissemble nothing, not a boy; nor change
Thy body's habit, nor mind; be not strange
To thyself only. All will spy in thy face
A blushing, womanly, discovering grace.
Richly cloth'd apes are called apes, and as soon
Eclips'd as bright we call the moon the moon.
Men of France, changeable cameleons,
Spittles of diseases, shops of fashions,
Love's fuellers, and the rightest company
Of players, which upon the world's stage be,
Will quickly know thee. . . . O stay here! for thee
England is only a worthy gallery,
To walk in expectation; till from thence
Our greatest King call thee to his presence.
When I am gone, dream me some happiness,
Nor let thy looks our long hid love confess,
Nor praise, nor dispraise me; nor bless, nor curse
Openly love's force, nor in bed fright thy nurse
With midnight startings, crying out, Oh, oh,
Nurse, oh, my love is slain, I saw him go
O'er the white Alps alone; I saw him, I,
Assail'd, fight, taken, stabb'd, bleed, fall, and die.
Augur me better chance, except dread Jove
Think it enough for me to have had thy love.'

Some one then inquired of B—— if we could not see from the window the Temple-walk in which Chaucer used to take his exercise; and on his name being put to the vote, I was pleased to find that there was a general sensation in his favour in all but A——, who said something about the ruggedness of the metre, and even objected to the quaintness of the orthography. I was vexed at this superficial gloss, pertinaciously reducing every thing to its own trite level, and asked 'if he did not think it would be worth while to scan the eye that had first greeted the Muse in that dim twilight and early dawn of English literature; to see the head, round which the visions of fancy must have played like gleams of inspiration or a sudden glory; to watch those lips that "lisped in numbers, for the numbers came"

—as by a miracle, or as if the dumb should speak? Nor was it alone that he had been the first to tune his native tongue (however imperfectly to modern ears); but he was himself a noble, manly character, standing before his age and striving to advance it; a pleasant humourist withal, who has not only handed down to us the living manners of his time, but had, no doubt, store of curious and quaint devices, and would make as hearty a companion as Mine Host of Tabard. His interview with Petrarch is fraught with interest. Yet I would rather have seen Chaucer in company with the author of the Decameron, and have heard them exchange their best stories together, the Squire's Tale against the Story of the Falcon, the Wife of Bath's Prologue against the Adventures of Friar Albert. How fine to see the high mysterious brow which learning then wore, relieved by the gay, familiar tone of men of the world, and by the courtesies of genius. Surely, the thoughts and feelings which passed through the minds of these great revivers of learning, these Cadmuses who sowed the teeth of letters, must have stamped an expression on their features, as different from the moderns as their books, and well worth the perusal. Dante,' I continued, 'is as interesting a person as his own Ugolino, one whose lineaments curiosity would as eagerly devour in order to penetrate his spirit, and the only one of the Italian poets I should care much to see. There is a fine portrait of Ariosto by no less a hand than Titian's; light, Moorish, spirited, but not answering our idea. The same artist's large colossal profile of Peter Aretine is the only likeness of the kind that has the effect of conversing with "the mighty dead," and this is truly spectral, ghastly, necromantic.' B—— put it to me if I should like to see Spenser as well as Chaucer; and I answered without hesitation, 'No; for that his beauties were ideal, visionary, not palpable or personal, and therefore connected with less curiosity about the man. His poetry was the essence of romance, a very halo round the bright orb of fancy; and the bringing in the individual might dissolve the charm. No tones of voice could come up to the mellifluous cadence of his verse; no form but of a winged angel could vie with the airy shapes he has described. He was (to our apprehensions) rather "a creature of the element, that lived in the rainbow and played in the plighted clouds," than an ordinary mortal. Or if he did appear, I should wish it to be as a mere vision, like one of his own pageants, and that he should pass by unquestioned like a dream or sound—

> ——"*That* was Arion crown'd:
> So went he playing on the wat'ry plain!"'

Captain C. muttered something about Columbus, and M. C. hinted

at the Wandering Jew; but the last was set aside as spurious, and the first made over to the New World.

'I should like,' said Miss D——, 'to have seen Pope talking with Patty Blount; and I *have* seen Goldsmith.' Every one turned round to look at Miss D——, as if by so doing they too could get a sight of Goldsmith.

'Where,' asked a harsh croaking voice, 'was Dr. Johnson in the years 1745-6? He did not write any thing that we know of, nor is there any account of him in Boswell during those two years. Was he in Scotland with the Pretender? He seems to have passed through the scenes in the Highlands in company with Boswell many years after "with lack-lustre eye," yet as if they were familiar to him, or associated in his mind with interests that he durst not explain. If so, it would be an additional reason for my liking him; and I would give something to have seen him seated in the tent with the youthful Majesty of Britain, and penning the Proclamation to all true subjects and adherents of the legitimate Government.'

'I thought,' said A——, turning short round upon B——, 'that you of the Lake School did not like Pope?'—'Not like Pope! My dear sir, you must be under a mistake—I can read him over and over for ever!'—'Why certainly, the "Essay on Man" must be master-piece.'—'It may be so, but I seldom look into it.'—'Oh! then it 's his Satires you admire?'—'No, not his Satires, but his friendly Epistles and his compliments.'—'Compliments! I did not know he ever made any.'—'The finest,' said B——, 'that were ever paid by the wit of man. Each of them is worth an estate for life—nay, is an immortality. There is that superb one to Lord Cornbury:

> "Despise low joys, low gains;
> Disdain whatever Cornbury disdains;
> Be virtuous, and be happy for your pains."

'Was there ever more artful insinuation of idolatrous praise? And then that noble apotheosis of his friend Lord Mansfield (however little deserved), when, speaking of the House of Lords, he adds—

> "Conspicuous scene! another yet is nigh,
> (More silent far) where kings and poets lie;
> Where Murray (long enough his country's pride)
> Shall be no more than Tully or than Hyde!"

'And with what a fine turn of indignant flattery he addresses Lord Bolingbroke—

> "Why rail they then, if but one wreath of mine,
> Oh! all accomplish'd St. John, deck thy shrine?"

'Or turn,' continued B——, with a slight hectic on his cheek and his eye glistening, 'to his list of early friends:

> "But why then publish? Granville the polite,
> And knowing Walsh, would tell me I could write;
> Well-natured Garth inflamed with early praise,
> And Congreve loved and Swift endured my lays:
> The courtly Talbot, Somers, Sheffield read,
> Ev'n mitred Rochester would nod the head;
> And St. John's self (great Dryden's friend before)
> Received with open arms one poet more.
> Happy my studies, if by these approved!
> Happier their author, if by these beloved!
> From these the world will judge of men and books,
> Not from the Burnets, Oldmixons, and Cooks."'

Here his voice totally failed him, and throwing down the book, he said, 'Do you think I would not wish to have been friends with such a man as this?'

'What say you to Dryden?'—'He rather made a show of himself, and courted popularity in that lowest temple of Fame, a coffee-house, so as in some measure to vulgarize one's idea of him. Pope, on the contrary, reached the very *beau ideal* of what a poet's life should be; and his fame while living seemed to be an emanation from that which was to circle his name after death. He was so far enviable (and one would feel proud to have witnessed the rare spectacle in him) that he was almost the only poet and man of genius who met with his reward on this side of the tomb, who realized in friends, fortune, the esteem of the world, the most sanguine hopes of a youthful ambition, and who found that sort of patronage from the great during his lifetime which they would be thought anxious to bestow upon him after his death. Read Gay's verses to him on his supposed return from Greece, after his translation of Homer was finished, and say if you would not gladly join the bright procession that welcomed him home, or see it once more land at Whitehall-stairs.'—'Still,' said Miss D——, 'I would rather have seen him talking with Patty Blount, or riding by in a coronet-coach with Lady Mary Wortley Montagu!'

E——, who was deep in a game of piquet at the other end of the room, whispered to M. C. to ask if Junius would not be a fit person to invoke from the dead. 'Yes,' said B——, 'provided he would agree to lay aside his mask.'

We were now at a stand for a short time, when Fielding was mentioned as a candidate: only one, however, seconded the proposition. 'Richardson?'—'By all means, but only to look at him

through the glass-door of his back-shop, hard at work upon one of his novels (the most extraordinary contrast that ever was presented between an author and his works), but not to let him come behind his counter lest he should want you to turn customer, nor to go upstairs with him, lest he should offer to read the first manuscript of Sir Charles Grandison, which was originally written in eight and twenty volumes octavo, or get out the letters of his female correspondents, to prove that Joseph Andrews was low.'

There was but one statesman in the whole of English history that any one expressed the least desire to see—Oliver Cromwell, with his fine, frank, rough, pimply face, and wily policy;—and one enthusiast, John Bunyan, the immortal author of the Pilgrim's Progress. It seemed that if he came into the room, dreams would follow him, and that each person would nod under his golden cloud, 'nigh-sphered in Heaven,' a canopy as strange and stately as any in Homer.

Of all persons near our own time, Garrick's name was received with the greatest enthusiasm, who was proposed by J. F——. He presently superseded both Hogarth and Handel, who had been talked of, but then it was on condition that he should act in tragedy and comedy, in the play and the farce, Lear and Wildair and Abel Drugger. What a *sight for sore eyes* that would be! Who would not part with a year's income at least, almost with a year of his natural life, to be present at it? Besides, as he could not act alone, and recitations are unsatisfactory things, what a troop he must bring with him—the silver-tongued Barry, and Quin, and Shuter and Weston, and Mrs. Clive and Mrs. Pritchard, of whom I have heard my father speak as so great a favourite when he was young! This would indeed be a revival of the dead, the restoring of art; and so much the more desirable, as such is the lurking scepticism mingled with our overstrained admiration of past excellence, that though we have the speeches of Burke, the portraits of Reynolds, the writings of Goldsmith, and the conversation of Johnson, to show what people could do at that period, and to confirm the universal testimony to the merits of Garrick; yet, as it was before our time, we have our misgivings, as if he was probably after all little better than a Bartlemy-fair actor, dressed out to play Macbeth in a scarlet coat and laced cocked-hat. For one, I should like to have seen and heard with my own eyes and ears. Certainly, by all accounts, if any one was ever moved by the true histrionic *æstus*, it was Garrick. When he followed the Ghost in Hamlet, he did not drop the sword, as most actors do behind the scenes, but kept the point raised the whole way round, so fully was he possessed with the idea, or so anxious not to lose sight of his part for a moment. Once at a splendid dinner-party

at Lord ——'s, they suddenly missed Garrick, and could not imagine what was become of him, till they were drawn to the window by the convulsive screams and peals of laughter of a young negro boy, who was rolling on the ground in an ecstacy of delight to see Garrick mimicing a turkey-cock in the court-yard, with his coat-tail stuck out behind, and in a seeming flutter of feathered rage and pride. Of our party only two persons present had seen the British Roscius; and they seemed as willing as the rest to renew their acquaintance with their old favourite.

We were interrupted in the hey-day and mid-career of this fanciful speculation, by a grumbler in a corner, who declared it was a shame to make all this rout about a mere player and farce-writer, to the neglect and exclusion of the fine old dramatists, the contemporaries and rivals of Shakspeare. B—— said he had anticipated this objection when he had named the author of Mustapha and Alaham; and out of caprice insisted upon keeping him to represent the set, in preference to the wild hair-brained enthusiast Kit Marlowe; to the sexton of St. Ann's, Webster, with his melancholy yew-trees and death's-heads; to Deckar, who was but a garrulous proser; to the voluminous Heywood; and even to Beaumont and Fletcher, whom we might offend by complimenting the wrong author on their joint productions. Lord Brook, on the contrary, stood quite by himself, or in Cowley's words, was 'a vast species alone.' Some one hinted at the circumstance of his being a lord, which rather startled B——, but he said a *ghost* would perhaps dispense with strict etiquette, on being regularly addressed by his title. Ben Jonson divided our suffrages pretty equally. Some were afraid he would begin to traduce Shakspeare, who was not present to defend himself. 'If he grows disagreeable,' it was whispered aloud, 'there is G——can match him.' At length, his romantic visit to Drummond of Hawthornden was mentioned, and turned the scale in his favour.

B—— inquired if there was any one that was hanged that I would choose to mention? And I answered, Eugene Aram.[1] The name of the 'Admirable Crichton' was suddenly started as a splendid example of *waste* talents, so different from the generality of his countrymen. This choice was mightily approved by a North-Briton present, who declared himself descended from that prodigy of learning and accomplishment, and said he had family-plate in his possession as vouchers for the fact, with the initials A. C.—*Admirable Crichton!* H—— laughed or rather roared as heartily at this as I should think he has done for many years.

[1] See Newgate Calendar for 1758.

The last-named Mitre-courtier [1] then wished to know whether there were any metaphysicians to whom one might be tempted to apply the wizard spell? I replied, there were only six in modern times deserving the name—Hobbes, Berkeley, Butler, Hartley, Hume, Leibnitz; and perhaps Jonathan Edwards, a Massachusets man.[2] As to the French, who talked fluently of having *created* this science, there was not a title in any of their writings, that was not to be found literally in the authors I had mentioned. [Horne Tooke, who might have a claim to come in under the head of Grammar, was still living.] None of these names seemed to excite much interest, and I did not plead for the re-appearance of those who might be thought best fitted by the abstracted nature of their studies for their present spiritual and disembodied state, and who, even while on this living stage, were nearly divested of common flesh and blood. As A—— with an uneasy fidgetty face was about to put some question about Mr. Locke and Dugald Stewart, he was prevented by M. C. who observed, 'If J—— was here, he would undoubtedly be for having up those profound and redoubted scholiasts, Thomas Aquinas and Duns Scotus.' I said this might be fair enough in him who had read or fancied he had read the original works, but I did not see how we could have any right to call up these authors to give an account of themselves in person, till we had looked into their writings.

By this time it should seem that some rumour of our whimsical deliberation had got wind, and had disturbed the *irritabile genus* in their shadowy abodes, for we received messages from several candidates that we had just been thinking of. Gray declined our invitation, though he had not yet been asked: Gay offered to come and bring in his hand the Duchess of Bolton, the original Polly: Steele and Addison left their cards as Captain Sentry and Sir Roger de Coverley: Swift came in and sat down without speaking a word, and quitted the room as abruptly: Otway and Chatterton were seen lingering on the opposite side of the Styx, but could not muster enough between them to pay Charon his fare: Thomson fell asleep in the boat, and was

[1] B—— at this time occupied chambers in Mitre court, Fleet Street.

[2] Lord Bacon is not included in this list, nor do I know where he should come in. It is not easy to make room for him and his reputation together. This great and celebrated man in some of his works recommends it to pour a bottle of claret into the ground of a morning, and to stand over it, inhaling the perfumes. So he sometimes enriched the dry and barren soil of speculation with the fine aromatic spirit of his genius. His 'Essays' and his 'Advancement of Learning' are works of vast depth and scope of observation. The last, though it contains no positive discoveries, is a noble chart of the human intellect, and a guide to all future inquirers.

rowed back again—and Burns sent a low fellow, one John Barleycorn, an old companion of his who had conducted him to the other world, to say that he had during his lifetime been drawn out of his retirement as a show, only to be made an exciseman of, and that he would rather remain where he was. He desired, however, to shake hands by his representative—the hand, thus held out, was in a burning fever, and shook prodigiously.

The room was hung round with several portraits of eminent painters. While we were debating whether we should demand speech with these masters of mute eloquence, whose features were so familiar to us, it seemed that all at once they glided from their frames, and seated themselves at some little distance from us. There was Leonardo with his majestic beard and watchful eye, having a bust of Archimedes before him; next him was Raphael's graceful head turned round to the Fornarina; and on his other side was Lucretia Borgia, with calm, golden locks; Michael Angelo had placed the model of St. Peter's on the table before him; Corregio had an angel at his side; Titian was seated with his Mistress between himself and Giorgioni; Guido was accompanied by his own Aurora, who took a dice-box from him; Claude held a mirror in his hand; Rubens patted a beautiful panther (led in by a satyr) on the head; Vandyke appeared as his own Paris, and Rembrandt was hid under furs, gold chains and jewels, which Sir Joshua eyed closely, holding his hand so as to shade his forehead. Not a word was spoken; and as we rose to do them homage, they still presented the same surface to the view. Not being *bonâ-fide* representations of living people, we got rid of the splendid apparitions by signs and dumb show. As soon as they had melted into thin air, there was a loud noise at the outer door, and we found it was Giotto, Cimabue, and Ghirlandaio, who had been raised from the dead by their earnest desire to see their illustrious successors—

> 'Whose names on earth
> In Fame's eternal records live for aye!'

Finding them gone, they had no ambition to be seen after them, and mournfully withdrew. 'Egad!' said B——, 'those are the very fellows I should like to have had some talk with, to know how they could see to paint when all was dark around them?'

'But shall we have nothing to say,' interrogated G. J——, 'to the Legend of Good Women?'—'Name, name, Mr. J——,' cried H—— in a boisterous tone of friendly exultation, 'name as many as you please, without reserve or fear of molestation!' J—— was perplexed between so many amiable recollections, that the name of the

lady of his choice expired in a pensive whiff of his pipe; and B—— impatiently declared for the Duchess of Newcastle. Mrs. Hutchinson was no sooner mentioned, than she carried the day from the Duchess. We were the less solicitous on this subject of filling up the posthumous lists of Good Women, as there was already one in the room as good, as sensible, and in all respects as exemplary, as the best of them could be for their lives! 'I should like vastly to have seen Ninon de l'Enclos,' said that incomparable person; and this immediately put us in mind that we had neglected to pay honour due to our friends on the other side of the Channel: Voltaire, the patriarch of levity, and Rousseau, the father of sentiment, Montaigne and Rabelais (great in wisdom and in wit), Molière and that illustrious group that are collected round him (in the print of that subject) to hear him read his comedy of the Tartuffe at the house of Ninon; Racine, La Fontaine, Rochefoucault, St. Evremont, &c.

'There is one person,' said a shrill, querulous voice, 'I would rather see than all these—Don Quixote!'

'Come, come!' said H——; 'I thought we should have no heroes, real or fabulous. What say you, Mr. B——? Are you for eking out your shadowy list with such names as Alexander, Julius Cæsar, Tamerlane, or Ghengis Khan?'—'Excuse me,' said B——, 'on the subject of characters in active life, plotters and disturbers of the world, I have a crotchet of my own, which I beg leave to reserve.'—'No, no! come, out with your worthies!'—'What do you think of Guy Faux and Judas Iscariot?' H—— turned an eye upon him like a wild Indian, but cordial and full of smothered glee. 'Your most exquisite reason!' was echoed on all sides; and A—— thought that B—— had now fairly entangled himself. 'Why, I cannot but think,' retorted he of the wistful countenance, 'that Guy Faux, that poor fluttering annual scare-crow of straw and rags, is an ill-used gentleman. I would give something to see him sitting pale and emaciated, surrounded by his matches and his barrels of gunpowder, and expecting the moment that was to transport him to Paradise for his heroic self-devotion; but if I say any more, there is that fellow G—— will make something of it. And as to Judas Iscariot, my reason is different. I would fain see the face of him, who, having dipped his hand in the same dish with the Son of Man, could afterwards betray him. I have no conception of such a thing; nor have I ever seen any picture (not even Leonardo's very fine one) that gave me the least idea of it.'—'You have said enough, Mr. B——, to justify your choice.'

'Oh! ever right, Menenius,—ever right!'

'There is only one other person I can ever think of after this,'

continued H——; but without mentioning a name that once put on a semblance of mortality. 'If Shakspeare was to come into the room, we should all rise up to meet him; but if that person was to come into it, we should all fall down and try to kiss the hem of his garment!'

As a lady present seemed now to get uneasy at the turn the conversation had taken, we rose up to go. The morning broke with that dim, dubious light by which Giotto, Cimabue, and Ghirlandaio must have seen to paint their earliest works; and we parted to meet again and renew similar topics at night, the next night, and the night after that, till that night overspread Europe which saw no dawn. The same event, in truth, broke up our little Congress that broke up the great one. But that was to meet again: our deliberations have never been resumed.

## ON THE CONVERSATION OF LORDS.

*The New Monthly Magazine.*] [*April*, 1826.

'An infinite deal of nothing.'—SHAKSPEARE.

THE conversation of Lords is very different from that of authors. Mounted on horseback, they stick at nothing in the chace, and clear every obstacle with flying leaps, while we poor devils have no chance of keeping up with them with our clouten shoes and long hunting-poles. They have all the benefit of education, society, confidence, they read books, purchase pictures, breed horses, learn to ride, dance, and fence, look after their estates, travel abroad:—authors have none of these advantages, or inlets of knowledge, to assist them, except one, reading; and this is still more impoverished and clouded by the painful exercise of their own thoughts. The knowledge of the Great has a character of wealth and property in it, like the stores of the rich merchant or manufacturer, who lays his hands on all within his reach: the understanding of the student is like the workshop of the mechanic, who has nothing but what he himself creates. How difficult is the production, how small the display in the one case compared to the other! Most of Correggio's designs are contained in one small room at Parma: how different from the extent and variety of some hereditary and princely collections!

The human mind has a trick (probably a very natural and consoling one) of striking a balance between the favours of wisdom and of fortune, and of making one thing a gratuitous and convenient foil to another. Whether this is owing to envy or to a love of justice, I

will not say: but whichever it is owing to, I must own I do not think it well founded. A scholar is without money: therefore (to make the odds even) we argue (not very wisely) that a rich man must be without ideas. This does not follow. 'The wish is father to that thought;' and the thought is a spurious one. We might as well pretend, that because a man has the advantage of us in height, he is not strong or in good health; or because a woman is handsome, she is not at the same time young, accomplished and well-bred. Our fastidious self-love or our rustic prejudices may revolt at the accumulation of advantages in others; but we must learn to submit to the mortifying truth, which every day's experience points out, with what grace we may. There were those who grudged to Lord Byron the name of a poet because he was of noble birth; as he himself could not endure the praises bestowed upon Wordsworth, whom he considered as a clown. He carried this weakness so far, that he even seemed to regard it as a piece of presumption in Shakspeare *to be preferred before him* as a dramatic author, and contended that Milton's writing an epic poem and the 'Answer to Salmasius' was entirely owing to vanity—so little did he relish the superiority of the old blind school-master. So it is that one party would arrogate every advantage to themselves, while those on the other side would detract from all in their rivals that they do not themselves possess. Some will not have the statue painted: others can see no beauty in the clay-model!

The man of rank and fortune, besides his chance for the common or (now and then) an uncommon share of wit and understanding, has it in his power to avail himself of every thing that is to be taught of art and science; he has tutors and valets at his beck; he may master the dead languages, he *must* acquire the modern ones; he moves in the highest circles, and may descend to the lowest; the paths of pleasure, of ambition, of knowledge, are open to him; he may devote himself to a particular study, or skim the cream of all; he may read books or men or things, as he finds most convenient or agreeable; he is not forced to confine his attention to some one dry uninteresting pursuit; he has a single *hobby*, or half a dozen; he is not distracted by care, by poverty and want of leisure; he has every opportunity and facility afforded him for acquiring various accomplishments of body or mind, and every encouragement, from confidence and success, for making an imposing display of them; he may laugh with the gay, jest with the witty, argue with the wise; he has been in courts, in colleges, and camps, is familiar with playhouses and taverns, with the riding-house and the dissecting-room, has been present at or taken part in the debates of both Houses of Parliament, was in the O. P.

row, and is deep in the Fancy, understands the broadsword exercise, is a connoisseur in regimentals, plays the whole game at whist, is a tolerable proficient at backgammon, drives four in hand, skates, rows, swims, shoots; knows the different sorts of game and modes of agriculture in the different counties of England, the manufactures and commerce of the different towns, the politics of Europe, the campaigns in Spain, has the Gazette, the newspapers, and reviews at his fingers' ends, has visited the finest scenes of Nature and beheld the choicest works of Art, and is in society where he is continually hearing or talking of all these things; and yet we are surprised to find that a person so circumstanced and qualified has any ideas to communicate or words to express himself, and is not, as by patent and prescription he was bound to be, a mere well-dressed fop of fashion or a booby lord! It would be less remarkable if a poor author, who has none of this giddy range and scope of information, who pores over the page till it fades from his sight, and refines upon his style till the words stick in his throat, should be dull as a beetle and mute as a fish, instead of spontaneously pouring out a volume of wit and wisdom on every subject that can be started.

An author lives out of the world, or mixes chiefly with those of his own class; which renders him pedantic and pragmatical, or gives him a reserved, hesitating, and *interdicted* manner. A lord or gentleman-commoner goes into the world, and this imparts that fluency, spirit, and freshness to his conversation, which arises from the circulation of ideas and from the greater animation and excitement of unrestrained intercourse. An author's tongue is tied for want of somebody to speak to: his ideas rust and become obscured, from not being brought out in company and exposed to the gaze of instant admiration. A lord has always some one at hand on whom he can 'bestow his tediousness,' and grows voluble, copious, inexhaustible in consequence: his wit is polished, and the flowers of his oratory expanded by his smiling commerce with the world, like the figures in tapestry, that after being thrust into a corner and folded up in closets, are displayed on festival and gala-days. Again, the man of fashion and fortune reduces many of those arts and mysteries to practice, of which the scholar gains all his knowledge from books and vague description. Will not the rules of architecture find a readier reception and sink deeper into the mind of the proprietor of a noble mansion, or of him who means to build one, than of the half-starved occupier of a garret? Will not the political economist's insight into Mr. Ricardo's doctrine of Rent, or Mr. Malthus's theory of Population, be vastly quickened by the circumstance of his possessing a large landed estate and having to pay enormous poor-

rates? And in general is it not self-evident that a man's knowledge of the true interests of the country will be enlarged just in proportion to the *stake* he has in it? A person may have read accounts of different cities and the customs of different nations: but will this give him the same accurate idea of the situation of celebrated places, of the aspect and manners of the inhabitants, or the same lively impulse and ardour and fund of striking particulars in expatiating upon them, as if he had run over half the countries of Europe, for no other purpose than to satisfy his own curiosity, and excite that of others on his return? I many years ago looked into the Duke of Newcastle's 'Treatise on Horsemanship'; all I remember of it is some quaint cuts of the Duke and his riding-master introduced to illustrate the lessons. Had I myself possessed a stud of Arabian coursers, with grooms and a master of the horse to assist me in reducing these precepts to practice, they would have made a stronger impression on my mind; and what interested myself from vanity or habit, I could have made interesting to others. I am sure I could have learnt to *ride the Great Horse*, and do twenty other things, in the time I have employed in endeavouring to make something out of nothing, or in conning the same problem fifty times over, as monks count over their beads! I have occasionally in my life bought a few prints, and hung them up in my room with great satisfaction; but is it to be supposed possible, from this casual circumstance, that I should compete in taste or in the knowledge of *virtù* with a peer of the realm, who has in his possession the costly designs, or a wealthy commoner, who has spent half his fortune in learning to distinguish copies from originals? 'A question not to be asked!' Nor is it likely that the having dipped into the Memoirs of Count Grammont, or of Lady Vane in Peregrine Pickle, should enable any one to sustain a conversation on subjects of love and gallantry with the same ease, grace, brilliancy, and spirit as the having been engaged in a hundred adventures of one's own, or heard the scandal and tittle-tattle of fashionable life for the last thirty years canvassed a hundred times. Books may be manufactured from other books by some dull, mechanical process: it is conversation and the access to the best society that alone fit us for society; or 'the act and practic part of life must be the mistress to our theorique,' before we can hope to shine in mixed company, or bend our previous knowledge to ordinary and familiar uses out of that plaster-cast mould which is as brittle as it is formal!

There is another *thing* which tends to produce the same effect, viz. that lords and gentlemen seldom trouble themselves about the knotty and uninviting parts of a subject: they leave it to 'the dregs

of earth' to drain the cup or find the bottom. They are attracted by the frothy and sparkling. If a question puzzles them, or is not likely to amuse others, they leave it to its fate, or to those whose business it is to contend with difficulty, and to pursue truth for its own sake. They string together as many available, *off-hand* topics as they can procure for love or money; and aided by a good person or address, sport them with very considerable effect at the next rout or party they go to. They do not *bore* you with pedantry, or tease you with sophistry. Their conversation is not made up of *moot-points* or *choke-pears*. They do not willingly forego 'the feast of reason or the flow of soul' to grub up some solitary truth or dig for hid treasure. They are amateurs, not professors; the patrons, not the drudges of knowledge. An author loses half his life, and *stultifies* his faculties, in hopes to find out something which perhaps neither he nor any one else can ever find out. For this he neglects half a hundred acquirements, half a hundred accomplishments. *Aut Cæsar aut nihil.* He is proud of the discovery or of the fond pursuit of one truth—a lord is vain of a thousand ostentatious common-places. If the latter ever devotes himself to some crabbed study, or sets about finding out the longitude, he is then to be looked upon as a humorist if he fails—a genius if he succeeds—and no longer belongs to the class I have been speaking of.

Perhaps a multiplicity of attainments and pursuits is not very favourable to their selectness; as a local and personal acquaintance with objects of imagination takes away from, instead of adding to, their romantic interest. Familiarity is said to breed contempt; or at any rate, the being brought into contact with places, persons, or things that we have hitherto only heard or read of, removes a certain aerial delicious veil of refinement from them, and strikes at that *ideal* abstraction, which is the charm and boast of a life conversant chiefly among books. The huddling a number of tastes and studies together tends to degrade and vulgarise each, and to give a crude, unconcocted, dissipated turn to the mind. Instead of stuffing it full of gross, palpable, immediate objects of excitement, a wiser plan would be to leave something in reserve, something hovering in airy space to draw our attention out of ourselves, to excite hope, curiosity, wonder, and never to satisfy it. The great art is not to throw a glare of light upon all objects, or to lay the whole extended landscape bare at one view; but so to manage as to see the more amiable side of things, and through the narrow vistas and loop-holes of retreat,

'Catch glimpses that may make us less forlorn.'

I hate to annihilate air and distance by the perpetual use of an

opera-glass, to run every thing into foreground, and to interpose no medium between the thought and the object. The breath of words stirs and plays idly with the gossamer web of fancy: the touch of things destroys it. I have seen a good deal of authors: and I believe that they (as well as I) would quite as lieve that I had not. Places I have seen too, that did not answer my expectation. Pictures (that is, some few of them) are the only things that are the better for our having studied them 'face to face, not in a glass darkly,' and that in themselves surpass any description we can give, or any notion we can form of them. But I do not think seriously, after all, that those who possess are the best judges of them. They become furniture, property in their hands. The purchasers look to the price they will fetch, or turn to that which they have cost. They consider not beauty or expression, but the workmanship, the date, the pedigree, the school—something that will figure in the description in a catalogue or in a puff in a newspaper. They are blinded by silly admiration of whatever belongs to themselves, and warped so as to eye 'with jealous leer malign' all that is not theirs. Taste is melted down in the crucible of avarice and vanity, and leaves a wretched *caput mortuum* of pedantry and conceit. As to books, they 'best can feel them who have read them most,' and who rely on them for their only support and their only chance of distinction. They most keenly relish the graces of style who have in vain tried to make them their own: they alone understand the value of a thought who have gone through the trouble of thinking. The privation of other advantages is not a clear loss, if it is counterbalanced by a proportionable concentration and unity of interest in what is left. The love of letters is the forlorn hope of the man of letters. His ruling passion is the love of fame. A member of the Roxburgh Club has a certain work (let it be the Decameron of Boccaccio) splendidly bound, and in the old quarto edition, we will say. In this not only his literary taste is gratified, but the pride of property, the love of external elegance and decoration. The poor student has only a paltry and somewhat worn copy of the same work (or perhaps only a translation) which he picked up at a stall, standing out of a shower of rain. What then! has not the Noble Virtuoso doubly the advantage, and a much higher pleasure in the perusal of the work? No; for these are vulgar and mechanical helps to the true enjoyment of letters. From all this mock-display and idle parade of binding and arms and dates, his unthought-of rival is precluded, and sees only the talismanic words, feels only the spirit of the author, and in that author reads 'with sparkling eyes'

'His title to a mansion in the skies.'

Oh! divine air of learning, fanned by the undying breath of genius, still let me taste thee, free from all adventitious admixtures,

'Pure in the last recesses of the soul!'

We are far at present from the style of Swift's 'Polite Conversation.' The fashionable tone has quite changed in this respect, and almost gone into the opposite extreme. At that period, the polite world seems to have been nearly at a stand, in a state of intellectual *abeyance*; or in the interval between the disuse of chivalrous exercises and the introduction of modern philosophy, not to have known how to pass its time and to have sunk into the most common-place formality and unmeaning apathy. But lo! at a signal given, or rather prompted by that most powerful of all calls, the want of something to do, all rush into the lists, having armed themselves anew with the shining panoply of science and of letters, with an eagerness, a perseverance, a dexterity, and a success that are truly astonishing. The higher classes have of late taken the lead almost as much in arts as they formerly did in arms, when the last was the only prescribed mode of distinguishing themselves from the rabble whom they treated as serfs and churls. The prevailing cue at present is to regard mere authors (who are not also of gentle blood) as dull, illiterate, poor creatures, a sort of pretenders to taste and elegance, and adventurers in intellect. The true adepts in black-letter are knights of the shire: the sworn patentees of Parnassus are Peers of the Realm. Not to pass for a literary quack, you must procure a diploma from the College of Heralds. A dandy conceals a bibliomanist: our belles are *blue-stockings*. The Press is so entirely monopolised by beauty, birth, or importance in the State, that an author by profession resigns the field to the crowd of well-dressed competitors, out of modesty or pride, is fain to keep out of sight—

'Or write by stealth and blush to find it fame!'

Lord Byron used to boast that he could bring forward a dozen young men of fashion who could beat all the regular authors at their several weapons of wit or argument; and though I demur to the truth of the assertion, yet there is no saying till the thing is tried. Young gentlemen make *very pretty sparrers*, but are not the 'ugliest customers' when they take off the gloves. Lord Byron himself was in his capacity of author an *out-and-outer*; but then it was at the expense of other things, for he could not talk except in short sentences and sarcastic allusions, he had no ready resources; all his ideas moulded themselves into stanzas, and all his ardour was carried off in rhyme.

The channel of his pen was worn deep by habit and power; the current of his thoughts flowed strong in it, and nothing remained to supply the neighbouring flats and shallows of miscellaneous conversation, but a few sprinklings of wit or gushes of spleen. An intense purpose concentrated and gave a determined direction to his energies, that 'held on their way, unslacked of motion.' The track of his genius was like a volcanic eruption, a torrent of burning lava, full of heat and splendour and headlong fury, that left all dry, cold, hard, and barren behind it! To say nothing of a host of female authors, a bright galaxy above our heads, there is no young lady of fashion in the present day, scarce a boarding-school girl, that is not mistress of as many branches of knowledge as would set up half-a-dozen literary hacks. In lieu of the sampler and the plain-stitch of our grandmothers, they have so many hours for French, so many for Italian, so many for English grammar and composition, so many for geography and the use of the globes, so many for history, so many for botany, so many for painting, music, dancing, riding, &c. One almost wonders how so many studies are crammed into the twenty-four hours; or how such fair and delicate creatures can master them without spoiling the smoothness of their brows, the sweetness of their tempers, or the graceful simplicity of their manners. A girl learns French (not only to read, but to speak it) in a few months, while a boy is as many years in learning to construe Latin. Why so? Chiefly because the one is treated as a *bagatelle* or agreeable relaxation; the other as a serious task or necessary evil. Education, a very few years back, was looked upon as a hardship, and enforced by menaces and blows, instead of being carried on (as now) as an amusement and under the garb of pleasure, and with the allurements of self-love. It is found that the products of the mind flourish better and shoot up more quickly in the sunshine of good-humour and in the air of freedom, than under the frowns of sullenness, or the shackles of authority. 'The labour we delight in physics pain.' The idlest people are not those who have most leisure-time to dispose of as they choose: take away the feeling of compulsion, and you supply a motive for application, by converting a toil into a pleasure. This makes nearly all the difference between the hardest drudgery and the most delightful exercise—not the degree of exertion, but the motive and the accompanying sensation. Learning does not gain proselytes by the austerity or awfulness of its looks. By representing things as so difficult, and as exacting such dreadful sacrifices, and to be acquired under such severe penalties, we not only deter the student from the attempt, but lay a dead-weight upon the imagination, and destroy that cheerfulness and alacrity of spirit which is the spring of thought and

action. But to return.—An author by profession reads a few works that he intends to criticise and cut up 'for a consideration,'—a *blue-stocking* by profession reads all that comes out to pass the time or satisfy her curiosity. The author has something to say about Fielding, Richardson, or even the Scotch novels: but he is soon distanced by the fair critic or overwhelmed with the contents of whole Circulating Libraries poured out upon his head without stint or intermission. He reads for an object and to live; she for the sake of reading or to talk. Be this as it may, the idle reader at present reads twenty-times as many books as the learned one. The former skims the surface of knowledge, and carries away the striking points and a variety of amusing details, while the latter reserves himself for great occasions, or perhaps does nothing under the pretence of having so much to do.

> 'From every work he challenges *essoine*,
> For contemplation's sake.'

The *literati* of Europe threaten at present to become the Monks of letters, and from having taken up learning as a profession, to live on the reputation of it. As gentlemen have turned authors, authors seem inclined to turn gentlemen; and enjoying the *otium cum dignitate*, to be much too refined and abstracted to condescend to the subordinate or mechanical parts of knowledge. They are too wise in general to be acquainted with anything in particular; and remain in a proud and listless ignorance of all that is within the reach of the vulgar. They are not, as of old, walking libraries or Encyclopædias, but rather certain faculties of the mind personified. They scorn the material and instrumental branches of inquiry, the husk and bran, and affect only the fine flour of literature—they are only to be called in to give the last polish to style, the last refinement to thought. They leave it to their drudges, the Reading Public, to accumulate the facts, to arrange the evidence, to make out the *data*, and like great painters whose pupils have got in the ground-work and the established proportions of a picture, come forward to go over the last thin glazing of the colours, or throw in the finer touches of expression. On my excusing myself to N—— for some blunder in history, by saying, 'I really had not time to read,'—he said, 'No, but you have time to write!' And once a celebrated critic taking me to task as to the subject of my pursuits, and receiving regularly the same answer to his queries, that I knew nothing of chemistry, nothing of astronomy, of botany, of law, of politics, &c. at last exclaimed somewhat impatiently—'What the devil is it, then, you *do* know?' I laughed, and was not very much disconcerted at the reproof, as it was just.

Modern men of letters may be divided into three classes; the

mere scholar or *book-worm*, all whose knowledge is taken from books, and who may be passed by as an obsolete character, little inquired after—the literary *hack* or coffee-house politician, who gets his information mostly from hearsay, and who makes some noise indeed, but the echo of it does not reach beyond his own club or circle—and the man of real or of pretended genius, who aims to draw upon his own resources of thought or feeling, and to throw a new light upon nature and books. This last personage (if he acts up to his supposed character) has too much to do to lend himself to a variety of pursuits, or to lay himself out to please in all companies. He has a task in hand, a vow to perform; and he cannot be diverted from it by incidental or collateral objects. All the time that he does not devote to this paramount duty, he should have to himself, to repose, to lie fallow, to gather strength and recruit himself. A boxer is led into the lists that he may not waste a particle of vigour needlessly; and a leader in Parliament, on the day that he is expected to get up a grand attack or defence, is not to be pestered with the ordinary news of the day. So an author (who is, or would be thought original) has no time for *spare* accomplishments or ornamental studies. All that he intermeddles with must be marshalled to bear upon his purpose. He must be acquainted with books and the thoughts of others, but only so far as to assist him on his way, and 'to take progression from them.' He starts from the point where *they* left off. All that does not aid him in his new career goes for nothing, is thrown out of the account; or is a useless and splendid incumbrance. Most of his time he passes in brooding over some wayward hint or suggestion of a thought, nor is he bound to give any explanation of what he does with the rest. He tries to melt down truth into essences—to express some fine train of feeling, to solve some difficult problem, to start what is new, or to perfect what is old; in a word, not to do what others can do (which in the division of mental labour he holds to be unnecessary), but to do what they all with their joint efforts cannot do. For this he is in no hurry, and must have the disposal of his leisure and the choice of his subject. The public can wait. He deems with a living poet, who is an example of his own doctrine—

> ——'That there are powers
> Which of themselves our minds impress;
> That we can feed this mind of ours
> In a wise passiveness.'

Or I have sometimes thought that the dalliance of the mind with Fancy or with Truth might be described almost in the words of Andrew Marvell's address 'To his Coy Mistress:'—

'Had we but world enough and time,
This toying, Lady, were no crime;
We would sit down, and think which way
To walk and pass our love's long day.
Thou by the Indian Ganges' side
Shouldst rubies find; I by the tide
Of Humber would complain. I would
Love you ten years before the flood;
And you should, if you please, refuse
Till the conversion of the Jews.
My contemplative love should grow
Vaster than empires, and more slow.
An hundred years should go to praise
Thine eyes, and on thy forehead gaze;
Two hundred to adore each breast,
But thirty thousand to the rest;
An age at least to every part,
And the last age should show your heart:
For, lady, you deserve this state;
Nor would I love at lower rate!'

The aspiring poet or prose-writer undertakes to do a certain thing; and if he succeeds, it is enough. While he is intent upon that or asleep, others may amuse themselves how they can with any topic that happens to be afloat and all the eloquence they are masters of, so that they do not disturb the champion of truth, or the proclaimer of beauty to the world. The Conversation of Lords, on the contrary, is to this like a newspaper to a book—the latter treats well or ill of one subject, and leads to a conclusion on one point; the other is made up of all sorts of things jumbled together, debates in parliament, law-reports, plays, operas, concerts, routs, levees, fashions, auctions, the last fight, foreign news, deaths, marriages, and *crim-cons*, bankruptcies, and quack medicines; and a large allowance is frequently to be made, besides the natural confusion of the subjects, for *cross-readings* in the speaker's mind![1] Or, to take another illustration, fashionable conversation has something theatrical or *melo-dramatic* in it; it is got up for immediate effect, it is calculated to make a great display, there is a profusion of paint, scenery, and dresses, the music

[1] As when a person asks you 'whether you do not find a strong resemblance between Rubens's pictures and Quarles's poetry?'—which is owing to the critic's having lately been at Antwerp and bought an edition of Quarles's Emblems. Odd combinations must take place where a number of ideas are brought together, with only a thin, hasty partition between them, and without a sufficient quantity of judgment to discriminate. An Englishman, of some apparent consequence passing by the St. Peter Martyr of Titian at Venice, observed 'It was a copy of the same subject by Domenichino at Bologna.' This betrayed an absolute ignorance both

is loud, there are banquets and processions, you have the dancers from the Opera, the horses from Astley's, and the elephant from Exeter 'Change, the stage is all life, bustle, noise and glare, the audience brilliant and delighted, and the whole goes off in a blaze of phosphorus; but the dialogue is poor, the story improbable, the critics shake their heads in the pit, and the next day the piece is *damned!*

In short, a man of rank and fortune takes the adventitious and ornamental part of letters, the obvious, popular, fashionable, that serves to amuse at the time, or minister to the cravings of vanity, without laying a very heavy tax on his own understanding, or the patience of his hearers. He furnishes his mind as he does his house, with what is showy, striking, and of the newest pattern: he mounts his *hobby* as he does his horse, which is brought to his door for an airing, and which (should it prove restive or sluggish) he turns away for another; or like a child at a fair, gets into a round-about of knowledge, till his head becomes giddy, runs from sight to sight, from booth to booth, and like the child, goes home loaded with trinkets, gew-gaws, and rattles. He does not pore and pine over an idea (like some poor hypochondriac) till it becomes impracticable, unsociable, incommunicable, absorbed in mysticism, and lost in minuteness: he is not upon oath never to utter anything but oracles, but rattles away in a fine careless hair-brained dashing manner, hit or miss, and succeeds the better for it. Nor does he prose over the same stale round of politics and the state of the nation (with the coffee-house politician), but launches out with freedom and gaiety into whatever has attraction and interest in it, 'runs the great circle, and is still at home.' He is inquisitive, garrulous, credulous, sanguine, florid,—neither pedantic nor vulgar. Neither is he intolerant, exclusive, bigoted to one set of opinions or one class of individuals. He clothes an abstract theory with illustrations from his own experience and observation, hates what is dry and dull, and throws in an air of high health, buoyant spirits, fortune and splendid connections to give animation and vividness to what perhaps might otherwise want it. He selects what is palpable without being gross or trivial, lends it colour from the flush of success, and elevation from the distinctions of rank. He runs on and never stops for an answer, rather dictating to others than endeavouring to ascertain their opinions, solving his own questions, improving

of Titian and of Domenichino, and of the whole world of art: yet unless I had also seen the St. Peter at Bologna, this connoisseur would have had the advantage of me, two to one, and might have disputed the precedence of the two pictures with me, but that chronology would have come to my aid. Thus persons who travel from place to place, and roam from subject to subject, make up by the extent and discursiveness of their knowledge for the want of truth and refinement in their conception of the objects of it.

upon their hints, and bearing down or precluding opposition by a good-natured loquacity or stately dogmatism. All this is perhaps more edifying as a subject of speculation than delightful in itself. Shakspeare somewhere says—'A man's mind is parcel of his fortunes,'—and I think the inference will be borne out in the present case. I should guess that in the prevailing tone of fashionable society or aristocratic literature would be found all that variety, splendour, facility, and startling effect which corresponds with external wealth, magnificence of appearance, and a command of opportunity; while there would be wanting whatever depends chiefly on intensity of pursuit, on depth of feeling, and on simplicity and independence of mind joined with straitened fortune. Prosperity is a great teacher; adversity is a greater. Possession pampers the mind; privation trains and strengthens it. Accordingly, we find but one really great name (Lord Bacon) in this rank of English society, where superiority is taken for granted, and reflected from outward circumstances. The rest are in the second class. Lord Bolingbroke, whom Pope idolized (and it pains me that all his idols are not mine) was a boastful empty mouther! I never knew till the other day, that Lord Bolingbroke was the model on which Mr. Pitt formed himself. He was his *Magnus Apollo*; and no wonder. The late Minister used to lament it as the great desideratum of English literature, that there was no record anywhere existing of his speeches as they were spoken, and declared that he would give any price for one of them reported as speeches were reported in the newspapers in our time. Being asked which he thought the best of his written productions, he would answer, raising his eyebrows and deepening the tones of his voice to a sonorous bass—'Why, undoubtedly, Sir, the Letter to Sir William Wyndham is the most masterly of all his writings, and the first composition for wit and eloquence in the English language;'—and then he would give his reasons at great length and *con amore*, and say that Junius had formed himself entirely upon it. Lord Bolingbroke had, it seems, a house next-door to one belonging to Lord Chatham at Walham-Green; and as the gardens joined, they could hear Lord Bolingbroke walking out with the company that came to see him in his retirement, and elaborately declaiming politics to the old lords and statesmen that were with him, and philosophy to the younger ones. Pitt learned this story from his father when a boy. This account, interesting in itself, was to me the more interesting and extraordinary, as it had always appeared to me that Mr. Pitt was quite an original, *sui generis*,

> 'As if a man were author of himself,
> And own'd no other kin'—

that so far from having a model or idol that he looked up to and grounded himself upon, he had neither admiration nor consciousness of any thing existing out of himself, and that he lived solely in the sound of his own voice and revolved in the circle of his own hollow and artificial periods. I have it from the same authority that he thought Cobbett the best writer and Horne Tooke the cleverest man of the day. His hatred of Wyndham was excessive and mutual.—Perhaps it may be said that Lord Chatham was a first-rate man in his way, and I incline to think it; but he was a self-made man, bred in a camp, not in a court, and his rank was owing to his talents.[1]

## ON A SUN-DIAL

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'To carve out dials quaintly, point by point.'
SHAKESPEARE.

*Horas non numero nisi serenas*—is the motto of a sun-dial near Venice. There is a softness and a harmony in the words and in the thought unparalleled. Of all conceits it is surely the most classical. 'I count only the hours that are serene.' What a bland and care-dispelling feeling! How the shadows seem to fade on the dial-plate as the sky lours, and time presents only a blank unless as its progress is marked by what is joyous, and all that is not happy sinks into oblivion! What a fine lesson is conveyed to the mind—to take no note of time but by its benefits, to watch only for the smiles and neglect the frowns of fate, to compose our lives of bright and gentle moments, turning always to the sunny side of things, and letting the rest slip from our imaginations, unheeded or forgotten! How different from the common art of self-tormenting! For myself, as I rode along the Brenta, while the sun shone hot upon its sluggish, slimy waves, my sensations were far from comfortable; but the reading this inscription on the side of a glaring wall in an instant restored me to myself; and still, whenever I think of or repeat it, it has the power of wafting me into the region of pure and blissful abstraction. I

[1] There are few things more contemptible than the conversation of mere *men of the town*. It is made up of the technicalities and cant of all professions, without the spirit or knowledge of any. It is flashy and vapid, or is like the rinsings of different liquors at a night-cellar instead of a bottle of fine old port. It is without body or clearness, and a heap of affectation. In fact, I am very much of the opinion of that old Scotch gentleman who owned that 'he preferred the dullest book he had ever read to the most brilliant conversation it had ever fallen to his lot to hear!'

cannot help fancying it to be a legend of Popish superstition. Some monk of the dark ages must have invented and bequeathed it to us, who, loitering in trim gardens and watching the silent march of time, as his fruits ripened in the sun or his flowers scented the balmy air, felt a mild languor pervade his senses, and having little to do or to care for, determined (in imitation of his sun-dial) to efface that little from his thoughts or draw a veil over it, making of his life one long dream of quiet! *Horas non numero nisi serenas*—he might repeat, when the heavens were overcast and the gathering storm scattered the falling leaves, and turn to his books and wrap himself in his golden studies! Out of some such mood of mind, indolent, elegant, thoughtful, this exquisite device (speaking volumes) must have originated.

Of the several modes of counting time, that by the sun-dial is perhaps the most apposite and striking, if not the most convenient or comprehensive. It does not obtrude its observations, though it 'morals on the time,' and, by its stationary character, forms a contrast to the most fleeting of all essences. It stands *sub dio*—under the marble air, and there is some connexion between the image of infinity and eternity. I should also like to have a sunflower growing near it with bees fluttering round.[1] It should be of iron to denote duration, and have a dull, leaden look. I hate a sun-dial made of wood, which is rather calculated to show the variations of the seasons, than the progress of time, slow, silent, imperceptible, chequered with light and shade. If our hours were all serene, we might probably take almost as little note of them, as the dial does of those that are clouded. It is the shadow thrown across, that gives us warning of their flight. Otherwise, our impressions would take the same undistinguishable hue; we should scarce be conscious of our existence. Those who have had none of the cares of this life to harass and disturb them, have been obliged to have recourse to the hopes and fears of the next to enliven the prospect before them. Most of the methods for measuring the lapse of time have, I believe, been the contrivance of monks and religious recluses, who, finding time hang heavy on their hands, were at some pains to see how they got rid of it. The hour-glass is, I suspect, an older invention; and it is certainly the most defective of all. Its creeping sands are not indeed an unapt emblem of the minute, countless portions of our existence; and the manner in which they gradually slide through the hollow glass and diminish in number till not a single one is left, also

[1] Is this a verbal fallacy? Or in the close, retired, sheltered scene which I have imagined to myself, is not the sun-flower a natural accompaniment of the sun-dial?

illustrates the way in which our years slip from us by stealth: but as a mechanical invention, it is rather a hindrance than a help, for it requires to have the time, of which it pretends to count the precious moments, taken up in attention to itself, and in seeing that when one end of the glass is empty, we turn it round, in order that it may go on again, or else all our labour is lost, and we must wait for some other mode of ascertaining the time before we can recover our reckoning and proceed as before. The philosopher in his cell, the cottager at her spinning-wheel must, however, find an invaluable acquisition in this 'companion of the lonely hour,' as it has been called,[1] which not only serves to tell how the time goes, but to fill up its vacancies. What a treasure must not the little box seem to hold, as if it were a sacred deposit of the very grains and fleeting sands of life! What a business, in lieu of other more important avocations, to see it out to the last sand, and then to renew the process again on the instant, that there may not be the least flaw or error in the account! What a strong sense must be brought home to the mind of the value and irrecoverable nature of the time that is fled; what a thrilling, incessant consciousness of the slippery tenure by which we hold what remains of it! Our very existence must seem crumbling to atoms, and running down (without a miraculous reprieve) to the last fragment. 'Dust to dust and ashes to ashes' is a text that might be fairly inscribed on an hour-glass: it is ordinarily associated with the scythe of Time and a Death's-head, as a *Memento mori*; and has, no doubt, furnished many a tacit hint to the apprehensive and visionary enthusiast in favour of a resurrection to another life!

The French give a different turn to things, less *sombre* and less edifying. A common and also a very pleasing ornament to a clock, in Paris, is a figure of Time seated in a boat which Cupid is rowing along, with the motto, *L'Amour fait passer le Tems*—which the wits again have travestied into *Le Tems fait passer L'Amour*. All this is ingenious and well; but it wants sentiment. I like a people who have something that they love and something that they hate, and with whom every thing is not alike a matter of indifference or *pour passer le tems*. The French attach no importance to any thing, except for the moment; they are only thinking how they shall get rid of one sensation for another; all their ideas are *in transitu*. Every thing is detached, nothing is accumulated. It would be a million of years before a Frenchman would think of the *Horas non numero nisi serenas*. Its impassioned repose and *ideal* voluptuousness are as far from their

[1] 'Once more, companion of the lonely hour,
I'll turn thee up again.'
*Bloomfield's Poems—The Widow to her Hour-glass.*

breasts as the poetry of that line in Shakspeare—'How sweet the moonlight sleeps upon that bank!' They never arrive at the classical —or the romantic. They blow the bubbles of vanity, fashion, and pleasure; but they do not expand their perceptions into refinement, or strengthen them into solidity. Where there is nothing fine in the ground-work of the imagination, nothing fine in the superstructure can be produced. They are light, airy, fanciful (to give them their due) —but when they attempt to be serious (beyond mere good sense) they are either dull or extravagant. When the volatile salt has flown off, nothing but a *caput mortuum* remains. They have infinite crotchets and caprices with their clocks and watches, which seem made for any thing but to tell the hour—gold-repeaters, watches with metal covers, clocks with hands to count the seconds. There is no escaping from quackery and impertinence, even in our attempts to calculate the waste of time. The years gallop fast enough for me, without remarking every moment as it flies; and farther, I must say I dislike a watch (whether of French or English manufacture) that comes to me like a footpad with its face muffled, and does not present its clear, open aspect like a friend, and point with its finger to the time of day. All this opening and shutting of dull, heavy cases (under pretence that the glass-lid is liable to be broken, or lets in the dust or air and obstructs the movement of the watch), is not to husband time, but to give trouble. It is mere pomposity and self-importance, like consulting a mysterious oracle that one carries about with one in one's pocket, instead of asking a common question of an acquaintance or companion. There are two clocks which strike the hour in the room where I am. This I do not like. In the first place, I do not want to be reminded twice how the time goes (it is like the second tap of a saucy servant at your door when perhaps you have no wish to get up): in the next place, it is starting a difference of opinion on the subject, and I am averse to every appearance of wrangling and disputation. Time moves on the same, whatever disparity there may be in our mode of keeping count of it, like true fame in spite of the cavils and contradictions of the critics. I am no friend to repeating watches. The only pleasant association I have with them is the account given by Rousseau of some French lady, who sat up reading the *New Heloise* when it first came out, and ordering her maid to sound the repeater, found it was too late to go to bed, and continued reading on till morning. Yet how different is the interest excited by this story from the account which Rousseau somewhere else gives of his sitting up with his father reading romances, when a boy, till they were startled by the swallows twittering in their nests at day-break, and the father cried out, half angry and ashamed

—'*Allons, mon fils ; je suis plus enfant que toi!*' In general, I have heard repeating watches sounded in stage-coaches at night, when some fellow-traveller suddenly awaking and wondering what was the hour, another has very deliberately taken out his watch, and pressing the spring, it has counted out the time ; each petty stroke acting like a sharp puncture on the ear, and informing me of the dreary hours I had already passed, and of the more dreary ones I had to wait till morning.

The great advantage, it is true, which clocks have over watches and other dumb reckoners of time is, that for the most part they strike the hour—that they are as it were the mouth-pieces of time ; that they not only point it to the eye, but impress it on the ear ; that they 'lend it both an understanding and a tongue.' Time thus speaks to us in an audible and warning voice. Objects of sight are easily distinguished by the sense, and suggest useful reflections to the mind ; sounds, from their intermittent nature, and perhaps other causes, appeal more to the imagination, and strike upon the heart. But to do this, they must be unexpected and involuntary—there must be no trick in the case—they should not be squeezed out with a finger and a thumb ; there should be nothing optional, personal in their occurrence ; they should be like stern, inflexible monitors, that nothing can prevent from discharging their duty. Surely, if there is any thing with which we should not mix up our vanity and self-consequence, it is with Time, the most independent of all things. All the sublimity, all the superstition that hang upon this palpable mode of announcing its flight, are chiefly attached to this circumstance. Time would lose its abstracted character, if we kept it like a curiosity or a jack-in-a-box : its prophetic warnings would have no effect, if it obviously spoke only at our prompting, like a paltry ventriloquism. The clock that tells the coming, dreaded hour—the castle bell, that 'with its brazen throat and iron tongue, sounds one unto the drowsy ear of night'—the curfew, 'swinging slow with sullen roar' o'er wizard stream or fountain, are like a voice from other worlds, big with unknown events. The last sound, which is still kept up as an old custom in many parts of England, is a great favourite with me. I used to hear it when a boy. It tells a tale of other times. The days that are past, the generations that are gone, the tangled forest glades and hamlets brown of my native country, the woodsman's art, the Norman warrior armed for the battle or in his festive hall, the conqueror's iron rule and peasant's lamp extinguished, all start up at the clamorous peal, and fill my mind with fear and wonder. I confess, nothing at present interests me but what has been—the recollection of the impressions of my early life, or events long past,

of which only the dim traces remain in a smouldering ruin or half-obsolete custom. That *things should be that are now no more*, creates in my mind the most unfeigned astonishment. I cannot solve the mystery of the past, nor exhaust my pleasure in it. The years, the generations to come, are nothing to me. We care no more about the world in the year 2300 than we do about one of the planets. Even George IV. is better than the Earl of Windsor. We might as well make a voyage to the moon as think of stealing a march upon Time with impunity. *De non apparentibus et non existentibus eadem est ratio.* Those who are to come after us and push us from the stage seem like upstarts and pretenders, that may be said to exist *in vacuo*, we know not upon what, except as they are blown up with vain and self conceit by their patrons among the moderns. But the ancients are true and *bonâ-fide* people, to whom we are bound by aggregate knowledge and filial ties, and in whom seen by the mellow light of history we feel our own existence doubled and our pride consoled, as we ruminate on the vestiges of the past. The public in general, however, do not carry this speculative indifference about the future to what is to happen to themselves, or to the part they are to act in the busy scene. For my own part, I do; and the only wish I can form, or that ever prompts the passing sigh, would be to live some of my years over again—they would be those in which I enjoyed and suffered most!

The ticking of a clock in the night has nothing very interesting nor very alarming in it, though superstition has magnified it into an omen. In a state of vigilance or debility, it preys upon the spirits like the persecution of a teazing pertinacious insect; and haunting the imagination after it has ceased in reality, is converted into the death-watch. Time is rendered vast by contemplating its minute portions thus repeatedly and painfully urged upon its attention, as the ocean in its immensity is composed of water-drops. A clock striking with a clear and silver sound is a great relief in such circumstances, breaks the spell, and resembles a sylph-like and friendly spirit in the room. Foreigners, with all their tricks and contrivances upon clocks and time-pieces, are strangers to the sound of village-bells, though perhaps a people that can dance may dispense with them. They impart a pensive, wayward pleasure to the mind, and are a kind of chronology of happy events, often serious in the retrospect—births, marriages, and so forth. Coleridge calls them 'the poor man's only music.' A village-spire in England peeping from its cluster of trees is always associated in imagination with this cheerful accompaniment, and may be expected to pour its joyous tidings on the gale. In Catholic countries, you are stunned with the everlasting tolling of

bells to prayers or for the dead. In the Apennines, and other wild and mountainous districts of Italy, the little chapel-bell with its simple tinkling sound has a romantic and charming effect. The Monks in former times appear to have taken a pride in the construction of bells as well as churches; and some of those of the great cathedrals abroad (as at Cologne and Rouen) may be fairly said to be hoarse with counting the flight of ages. The chimes in Holland are a nuisance. They dance in the hours and the quarters. They leave no respite to the imagination. Before one set has done ringing in your ears, another begins. You do not know whether the hours move or stand still, go backwards or forwards, so fantastical and perplexing are their accompaniments. Time is a more staid personage, and not so full of gambols. It puts you in mind of a tune with variations, or of an embroidered dress. Surely, nothing is more simple than time. His march is straightforward; but we should have leisure allowed us to look back upon the distance we have come, and not be counting his steps every moment. Time in Holland is a foolish old fellow with all the antics of a youth, who 'goes to church in a coranto, and lights his pipe in a cinque-pace.' The chimes with us, on the contrary, as they come in every three or four hours, are like stages in the journey of the day. They give a fillip to the lazy, creeping hours, and relieve the lassitude of country-places. At noon, their desultory, trivial song is diffused through the hamlet with the odour of rashers of bacon; at the close of day they send the toil-worn sleepers to their beds. Their discontinuance would be a great loss to the thinking or unthinking public. Mr. Wordsworth has painted their effect on the mind when he makes his friend Matthew, in a fit of inspired dotage,

> 'Sing those witty rhymes
> About the crazy old church-clock
> And the bewilder'd chimes.'

The tolling of the bell for deaths and executions is a fearful summons, though, as it announces, not the advance of time but the approach of fate, it happily makes no part of our subject. Otherwise, the 'sound of the bell' for Macheath's execution in the 'Beggar's Opera,' or for that of the Conspirators in 'Venice Preserved,' with the roll of the drum at a soldier's funeral, and a digression to that of my Uncle Toby, as it is so finely described by Sterne, would furnish ample topics to descant upon. If I were a moralist, I might disapprove the ringing in the new and ringing out the old year.

> 'Why dance ye, mortals, o'er the grave of Time?'

St Paul's bell tolls only for the death of our English kings, or a distinguished personage or two, with long intervals between.[1]

Those who have no artificial means of ascertaining the progress of time, are in general the most acute in discerning its immediate signs, and are most retentive of individual dates. The mechanical aids to knowledge are not sharpeners of the wits. The understanding of a savage is a kind of natural almanac, and more true in its prognostication of the future. In his mind's eye he sees what has happened or what is likely to happen to him, 'as in a map the voyager his course.' Those who read the times and seasons in the aspect of the heavens and the configurations of the stars, who count by moons and know when the sun rises and sets, are by no means ignorant of their own affairs or of the common concatenation of events. People in such situations have not their faculties distracted by any multiplicity of inquiries beyond what befalls themselves, and the outward appearances that mark the change. There is, therefore, a simplicity and clearness in the knowledge they possess, which often puzzles the more learned. I am sometimes surprised at a shepherd-boy by the roadside, who sees nothing but the earth and sky, asking me the time of day—he ought to know so much better than any one how far the sun is above the horizon. I suppose he wants to ask a question of a passenger, or to see if he has a watch. Robinson Crusoe lost his reckoning in the monotony of his life and that bewildering dream of solitude, and was fain to have recourse to the notches in a piece of wood. What a diary was his! And how time must have spread its circuit round him, vast and pathless as the ocean!

For myself, I have never had a watch nor any other mode of keeping time in my possession, nor ever wish to learn how time goes. It is a sign I have had little to do, few avocations, few engagements. When I am in a town, I can hear the clock; and when I am in the country, I can listen to the silence. What I like best is to lie whole mornings on a sunny bank on Salisbury Plain, without any object before me, neither knowing nor caring how time passes, and thus 'with light-winged toys of feathered Idleness' to melt down hours to moments. Perhaps some such thoughts as I have here set down float before me like motes before my half-shut eyes, or some vivid image of the past by forcible contrast rushes by me—'Diana and her fawn, and all the glories of the antique world;' then I start away to prevent the iron from entering my soul, and let fall some tears into that stream of time which separates me farther and farther from all I

[1] Rousseau has admirably described the effect of bells on the imagination in a passage in the Confessions, beginning '*Le son des cloches m'a toujours singulièrement affecté*,' &c.

once loved! At length I rouse myself from my reverie, and home to dinner, proud of killing time with thought, nay even without thinking. Somewhat of this idle humour I inherit from my father, though he had not the same freedom from *ennui*, for he was not a metaphysician; and there were stops and vacant intervals in his being which he did not know how to fill up. He used in these cases, and as an obvious resource, carefully to wind up his watch at night, and 'with lack-lustre eye' more than once in the course of the day look to see what o'clock it was. Yet he had nothing else in his character in common with the elder Mr. Shandy. Were I to attempt a sketch of him, for my own or the reader's satisfaction, it would be after the following manner:———but now I recollect, I have done something of the kind once before, and were I to resume the subject here, some bat or owl of a critic, with spectacled gravity, might swear I had stolen the whole of this Essay from myself—or (what is worse) from him! So I had better let it go as it is.

## WHY THE HEROES OF ROMANCE ARE INSIPID

*The New Monthly Magazine.*] [*November*, 1827.

Because it is taken for granted that they must be amiable and interesting, in the first instance, and like other things that are taken for granted, is but indifferently, or indeed cannot be made out at all in the sequel. To put it to the proof, to give illustrations of it, would be to throw a doubt upon the question. They have only to show themselves to ensure conquest. Indeed, the reputation of their victories goes before them, and is a pledge of their success before they even appear. They are, or are supposed to be, so amiable, so handsome, so accomplished, so captivating, that all hearts bow before them, and all the women are in love with them without knowing why or wherefore, except that it is understood that they are to be so. All obstacles vanish without a finger lifted or a word spoken, and the effect is produced without a blow being struck. When there is this imaginary charm at work, every thing they could do or say must weaken the impression, like arguments brought in favour of a self-evident truth: they very wisely say or do little or nothing, rely on their names and the author's good word, look, smile, and are adored; but to all but the heroines of romance and their confidantes, are exceedingly uninteresting and *common-place* personages, either great coxcombs or wonderfully insipid. When a lover is able to look unutterable things which produce the desired effect, what occasion

for him to exert his eloquence or make an impassioned speech in order to bring about a revolution in his favour, which is already accomplished by other less doubtful means? When the impression at first sight is complete and irresistible, why throw away any farther thoughts or words to make it more so? This were 'to gild refined gold, to paint the lily, to smooth the ice, to throw a perfume on the violet, or add another hue unto the rainbow, or seek with taper-light the beauteous eye of Heaven to garnish,' which has been pronounced to be 'wasteful and superfluous excess.' Authors and novel-writers therefore reserve for their second-rate and less prominent characters, the artillery of words, the arts of persuasion, and all the unavailing battery of hopeless attentions and fine sentiment, which are of no use to the more accomplished gallant, who makes his triumphant approaches by stolen glances and breathing sighs, and whose appearance alone supersedes the disclosure of all his other implied perfections and an importunate display of a long list of titles to the favour of the fair, which, as they are not insisted on, it would be vain and unbecoming to produce to the gaze of the world, or for the edification of the curious reader. It is quite enough if the lady is satisfied with her choice, and if (as generally happens both as a cause and consequence in such cases) the gentleman is satisfied with himself. If he indeed seemed to entertain a doubt upon the subject, the spell of his fascination would be broken, and the author would be obliged to derogate from the *beau-ideal* of his character, and make him do something to deserve the good opinion that might be entertained of him, and to which he himself had not led the way by boundless self-complacency and the conscious assurance of infallible success.

Another circumstance that keeps our novel-heroes in the background is, that if there was any doubt of their success, or they were obliged to employ the ordinary and vulgar means to establish their superiority over every one else, they would be no longer those 'faultless monsters' which it is understood that they must be to fill their part in the drama. The discarded or despairing, not the favoured lovers, are unavoidably the most interesting persons in the story. In fact, the principals are already disposed of in the first page; they are destined for each other by an unaccountable and uncontrollable sympathy: the ceremony is in a manner over, and they are already married people, with all the lawful attributes and indifference belonging to the character. To produce an interest, there must be mixed motives, alternate hope and fear, difficulties to struggle with, sacrifices to make; but the true hero of romance is too fine a gentleman to be subjected to this rude ordeal, or mortifying exposure, which devolves upon some much more unworthy and unpretending personage. The beauty of the outline

must not be disturbed by the painful conflicts of passion or the strong contrast of light and shade. The taste of the heroic cannot swerve for a moment from the object of its previous choice, who must never be placed in disadvantageous circumstances. The top characters occupy a certain prescriptive rank in the world of romance, by the rules of etiquette and laws of this sort of fictitious composition, reign like princes, and have only to do nothing to forfeit their privileges or compromise their supposed dignity.

The heroes of the old romances, the Grand Cyruses, the Artamenes, and Oroondates, are in this respect better than the moderns. They had their steel helmet and plume of feathers, the glittering spear and shield, the barbed steed, and the spread banner, and had knightly service to perform in joust and tournament, in the field of battle or the deep forest, besides the duty which they owed to their 'mistress' eyebrow,' and the favours they received at her hands. They were comparatively picturesque and adventurous personages, and men of action in the tented field, and lost all title to the smile of beauty if they did not deserve it by feats of prowess, and by the valour of their arms. However insipid they might be as accepted lovers, in their set speeches and improgressive languishments by which they paid their court to their hearts' idols, the 'fairest of the fair,' yet in their character of warriors and heroes, they were men of mettle, and had something in them. They did not merely sigh and smile and kneel in the presence of their mistresses—they had to unhorse their adversaries in combat, to storm castles, to vanquish giants, and lead armies. So far, so well. In the good old times of chivalry and romance, favour was won and maintained by the bold achievements and fair fame of the chosen knight, which keeps up a show of suspense and dramatic interest, instead of depending, as in more effeminate times, on taste, sympathy, and a refinement of sentiment and manners, of the delicacy of which it is impossible to convey any idea by words or actions. Even in the pompous and affected courtship of the romances of the seventeenth century (now, alas! exploded) the interviews between the lovers are so rare and guarded, their union, though agreed upon and inevitable, is so remote, the smile with which the lady regards her sworn champion, though as steady as that of one of the fixed stars, is like them so cold, as to give a tone of passion and interest to their enamoured flights, as though they were affected by the chances and changes of sublunary affairs. I confess I have read some of these fabulous folios formerly with no small degree of delight and breathless anxiety, particularly that of 'Cassandra'; and would willingly indeed go over it again to catch even a faint, a momentary glimpse of the pleasure with which I used at one period to peruse its prolix descrip-

tions and high-flown sentiments. Not only the Palmerins of England and Amadises of Gaul, who made their way to their mistresses' hearts by slaying giants and taming dragons, but the heroes of the French romances of intrigue and gallantry which succeeded those of necromancy and chivalry, and where the adventurers for the prize have to break through the fences of morality and scruples of conscience instead of stone-walls and enchantments dire, are to be excepted from the censure of downright insipidity which attaches to those ordinary drawing-room heroes, who are installed in the good graces of their Divinities by a look, and keep their places there by the force of *still life*! It is Gray who cries out, 'Be mine to read eternal new romances of Marivaux and Crebillon!' I could say the same of those of Madame La Fayette and the Duke de la Rochefoucault. 'The Princess of Cleves' is a most charming work of this kind; and the Duke de Nemours is a great favourite with me. He is perhaps the most brilliant personage that ever entered upon the *tapis* of a drawing-room, or trifled at a lady's toilette.

I prefer him, I own, vastly to Richardson's Sir Charles Grandison, whom I look upon as the prince of coxcombs; and so much the more impertinent as he is a moral one. His character appears to me 'ugly all over with affectation.' There is not a single thing that Sir Charles Grandison does or says all through the book from liking to any person or object but himself, and with a view to answer to a certain standard of perfection for which he pragmatically sets up. He is always thinking of himself, and trying to show that he is the wisest, happiest, and most virtuous person in the whole world. He is (or would be thought) a code of Christian ethics; a compilation and abstract of all gentlemanly accomplishments. There is nothing, I conceive, that excites so little sympathy as this inordinate egotism; or so much disgust as this everlasting self-complacency. Yet this self-admiration, brought forward on every occasion as the incentive to every action and reflected from all around him, is the burden and pivot of the story. 'Is not the man Sir Charles Grandison?'—is what he and all the other persons concerned are continually repeating to themselves. His preference of the little, insignificant, selfish, affected, puritanical Miss Byron, who is remarkable for nothing but her conceit of herself and her lover, to the noble Clementina, must for ever stamp him for the poltroon and blockhead that he was. What a contrast between these two females—the one, the favourite heroine, settling her idle punctilios and the choice of her ribbons for the wedding-day with equal interest, the other, self-devoted, broken-hearted, generous, disinterested, pouring out her whole soul in the fervent expressions and dying struggles of an unfortunate and hopeless affection! It was impossible indeed for the

genius of the author (strive all he could) to put the prettinesses and coquettish scruples of the bride-elect upon a par with the eloquent despair and impassioned sentiments of her majestic but unsuccessful rival. Nothing can show more clearly that the height of good fortune and of that conventional faultlessness which is supposed to secure it, is incompatible with any great degree of interest. Lady Clementina should have been married to Sir Charles to surfeit her of a coxcomb —Miss Byron to Lovelace to plague her with a rake! Have we not sometimes seen such matches? A slashing critic of my acquaintance once observed, that 'Richardson would be surprised in the next world to find Lovelace in Heaven and Grandison in Hell!' Without going this orthodox length, I must say there is something in Lovelace's vices more attractive than in the other's best virtues. Clarissa's attachment seems as natural as Clementina's is romantic. There is a *regality* about Lovelace's manner, and he appears clothed in a panoply of wit, gaiety, spirit, and enterprise, that is criticism-proof. If he had not possessed these dazzling qualities, nothing could have made us forgive for an instant his treatment of the spotless Clarissa; but indeed they might be said to be mutually attracted to and extinguished in each other's dazzling lustre! When we think of Lovelace and his luckless exploits, we can hardly be persuaded at this time of day that he wore a wig. Yet that he did so is evident; for Miss Howe when she gave him that spirited box on the ear, struck the powder out of it! Mr. B. in 'Pamela' has all the insipidity, that arises from patronising beauty and condescending to virtue. Pamela herself is delightfully made out; but she labours under considerable disadvantages, and is far from a *regular* heroine.

Sterne (thank God!) has neither hero nor heroine, and he does very well without them.

Many people find fault with Fielding's Tom Jones as gross and immoral. For my part, I have doubts of his being so very handsome from the author's always talking about his beauty, and I suspect he was a clown, from being constantly assured he was so very genteel. Otherwise, I think Jones acquits himself very well both in his actions and speeches, as a lover and as a *trencher-man* whenever he is called upon. Some persons, from their antipathy to that headlong impulse, of which Jones was the slave, and to that morality of good-nature which in him is made a foil to principle, have gone so far as to prefer Blifil as the *prettier fellow* of the two. I certainly cannot subscribe to this opinion, which perhaps was never meant to have followers, and has nothing but its singularity to recommend it. Joseph Andrews is a hero of the shoulder-knot: it would be hard to canvass his pretensions too severely, especially considering what a patron he has in

Parson Adams. That one character would cut up into a hundred fine gentlemen and novel-heroes! Booth is another of the good-natured tribe, a fine man, a very fine man! But there is a want of spirit to animate the well-meaning mass. He hardly deserved to have the hashed mutton kept waiting for him. The author has redeemed himself in Amelia; but a heroine with a *broken nose* and who was a married woman besides, must be rendered truly interesting and amiable to make up for superficial objections. The character of the Noble Peer in this novel is *not* insipid. If Fielding could have made virtue as admirable as he could make vice detestable, he would have been a greater master even than he was. I do not understand what those critics mean who say he got all his characters out of ale-houses. It is true he did some of them.

Smollett's heroes are neither one thing nor the other: neither very refined nor very insipid. Wilson in Humphrey Clinker comes the nearest to the *beau-ideal* of this character, the favourite of the novel-reading and boarding-school girl. Narcissa and Emilia Gauntlet are very charming girls; and Monimia in Count Fathom is a fine monumental beauty. But perhaps he must be allowed to be most *at home* in Winifred Jenkins!

The women have taken this matter up in our own time: let us see what they have made of it. Mrs. Radcliffe's heroes and lovers are perfect in their kind; nobody can find any fault with them, for nobody knows any thing about them. They are described as very handsome, and quite unmeaning and inoffensive.

'Her heroes have no character at all.'

Theodore, Valancourt,—what delightful names! and there is nothing else to distinguish them by. Perhaps, however, this indefiniteness is an advantage. We add expression to the inanimate outline, and fill up the blank with all that is amiable, interesting, and romantic. A long ride without a word spoken, a meeting that comes to nothing, a parting look, a moonlight scene, or evening skies that paint their sentiments for them better than the lovers can do for themselves, farewells too full of anguish, deliverances too big with joy to admit of words, suppressed sighs, faint smiles, the freshness of the morning, pale melancholy, the clash of swords, the clank of chains that make the fair one's heart sink within her, these are the chief means by which the admired authoress of 'The Romance of the Forest' and 'The Mysteries of Udolpho' keeps alive an ambiguous interest in the bosom of her fastidious readers, and elevates the lover into the hero of the fable. Unintelligible distinctions, impossible attempts, a

delicacy that shrinks from the most trifling objection, and an enthusiasm that rushes on its fate, such are the charming and teazing contradictions that form the flimsy texture of a modern romance! If the lover in such critical cases was any thing but a lover, he would cease to be the most amiable of all characters in the abstract and by way of excellence, and would be a traitor to the cause; to give reasons or to descend to particulars, is to doubt the omnipotence of love and shake the empire of credulous fancy; a sounding name, a graceful form, are all that is necessary to suspend the whole train of tears, sighs, and the softest emotions upon; the ethereal nature of the passion requires ethereal food to sustain it; and our youthful hero, in order to be perfectly interesting, must be drawn as perfectly insipid!

I cannot, however, apply this charge to Mrs. Inchbald's heroes or heroines. However finely drawn, they are an essence of sentiment. Their words are composed of the warmest breath, their tears scald, their sighs stifle. Her characters seem moulded of a softer clay, the work of fairest hands. Miss Milner is enchanting. Doriforth indeed is severe, and has a very stately opinion of himself, but he has spirit and passion. Lord Norwynne is the most unpleasant and obdurate. He seduces by his situation and kills by indifference, as is natural in such cases. But still through all these the fascination of the writer's personal feelings never quits you. On the other hand, Miss Burney's (Madame D'Arblay's) *forte* is ridicule, or an exquisite tact for minute absurdities, and when she aims at being fine she only becomes affected. No one had ever much less of the romantic. Lord Orville is a condescending suit of clothes; yet certainly the sense which Evelina has of the honour done her is very prettily managed. Sir Clement Willoughby is a much gayer and more animated person, though his wit outruns his discretion. Young Delville is the hero of punctilio—a perfect diplomatist in the art of love-making—and draws his parallels and sits down as deliberately before the citadel of his mistress's heart, as a cautious general lays siege to an impregnable fortress. Cecilia is not behind-hand with him in the game of studied cross-purposes and affected delays, and is almost the veriest and most provoking trifler on record. Miss Edgeworth, I believe, has no heroes. Her *trenchant* pen cuts away all extravagance and idle pretence, and leaves nothing but common sense, prudence, and propriety behind it, wherever it comes.

I do not apprehend that the heroes of the Author of Waverley form any very striking exception to the common rule. They conform to their designation and follow the general law of their being. They are for the most part very equivocal and undecided personages, who receive their governing impulse from accident, or are puppets in the

hands of their mistresses, such as Waverley, Ivanhoe, Frank Osbaldistone, Henry Morton, &c. I do not say that any of these are absolutely insipid, but they have in themselves no leading or master-traits, and they are worked out of very listless and inert materials into a degree of force and prominence solely by the genius of the author. Instead of acting, they are acted upon, and keep in the back-ground and in a neutral posture, till they are absolutely forced to come forward, and it is then with a very amiable reservation of modest scruples. Does it not seem almost, or generally speaking, as if a character to be put in this responsible situation of candidate for the highest favour of the public at large, or of the fair in particular, who is to conciliate all suffrages and concentrate all interests, must really have nothing in him to please or give offence, that he must be left a negative, feeble character without untractable or uncompromising points, and with a few slight recommendations and obvious good qualities which every one may be supposed to improve upon and fill up according to his or her inclination or fancy and the model of perfection previously existing in the mind? It is a privilege claimed, no doubt, by the fair reader to make out the object of her admiration and interest according to her own choice; and the same privilege, if not openly claimed, may be covertly exercised by others. We are all fond of our own creations, and if the author does little to his chief character and allows us to have a considerable hand in it, it may not suffer in our opinion from this circumstance. In fact, the hero of the work is not so properly the chief object in it, as a sort of blank left open to the imagination, or a lay-figure on which the reader disposes whatever drapery he pleases! Of all Sir Walter's characters the most dashing and spirited is the Sultan Saladin. But he is not meant for a hero, nor fated to be a lover. He is a collateral and incidental performer in the scene. His movements therefore remain free, and he is master of his own resplendent energies, which produce so much the more daring and felicitous an effect. So far from being intended to please all tastes or the most squeamish, he is not meant for any taste. He has no pretensions, and stands upon the sole ground of his own heroic acts and sayings. The author has none of the timidity or mawkishness arising from a fear of not coming up to his own professions, or to the expectations excited in the reader's mind. Any striking trait, any interesting exploit is more than was bargained for—is heaped measure, running over. There is no idle, nervous apprehension of falling short of perfection, arresting the hand or diverting the mind from truth and nature. If the Pagan is not represented as a monster and barbarian, all the rest is a god-send. Accordingly all is spontaneous, bold, and original in this beautiful

and glowing design, which is as magnificent as it is magnanimous.—Lest I should forget it, I will mention while I am on the subject of Scotch novels, that Mackenzie's 'Man of Feeling' is not without interest, but it is an interest brought out in a very singular and unprecedented way. He not merely says or does nothing to deserve the approbation of the goddess of his idolatry, but from extreme shyness and sensitiveness, instead of presuming on his merits, gets out of her way, and only declares his passion on his death-bed. Poor Harley! —Mr. Godwin's Falkland is a very high and heroic character: he, however, is not a love-hero; and the only part in which an episode of this kind is introduced, is of the most trite and mawkish description. The case is different in St. Leon. The author's resuscitated hero there quaffs joy, love, and immortality with a considerable *gusto*, and with appropriate manifestations of triumph.

As to the heroes of the philosophical school of romance, such as Goethe's Werther, &c., they are evidently out of the pale of this reasoning. Instead of being common-place and insipid, they are one violent and startling paradox from beginning to end. Instead of being cast in stiff unmeaning mould, they 'all germins spill at once' that make mere mortal men. They run a-tilt at all established usages and prejudices, and overset all the existing order of society. There is plenty of interest here; and instead of complaining of a calm, we are borne along by a hurricane of passion and eloquence, certainly without any thing of 'temperance that may give it smoothness.' Schiller's Moor, Kotzebue's heroes, and all the other German prodigies are of this stamp.

Shakspeare's lovers and Boccaccio's I like much: they seem to me full of tenderness and manly spirit, and free from insipidity and cant. Otway's Jaffier is, however, the true woman's man—full of passion and effeminacy, a mixture of strength and weakness. Perhaps what I have said above may suggest the true reason and apology for Milton's having unwittingly made Satan the hero of 'Paradise Lost.' He suffers infinite losses, and makes the most desperate efforts to recover or avenge them; and it is the struggle with fate and the privation of happiness that sharpens our desires, or enhances our sympathy with good or evil. We have little interest in unalterable felicity, nor can we join with heart and soul in the endless symphonies and exulting hallelujahs of the spirits of the blest. The remorse of a fallen spirit or 'tears such as angels shed' touch us more nearly.

# THE SHYNESS OF SCHOLARS

*The New Monthly Magazine.*] [*December*, 1827.

'And of his port as meek as is a maid.'

Scholars lead a contemplative and retired life, both which circumstances must be supposed to contribute to the effect in question. A life of study is also conversant with high and *ideal* models, which gives an ambitious turn to the mind; and pride is nearly akin to delicacy of feeling.

That a life of privacy and obscurity should render its votaries bashful and awkward, or unfit them for the routine of society, from the want both of a habit of going into company and from ignorance of its usages, is obvious to remark. No one can be expected to do that well or without a certain degree of hesitation and restraint, which he is not accustomed to do except on particular occasions, and at rare intervals. You might as rationally set a scholar or a clown on a tight-rope and expect them to dance gracefully and with every appearance of ease, as introduce either into the gay, laughing circle, and suppose that he will acquit himself handsomely and come off with applause in the retailing of anecdote or the interchange of repartee. 'If you have not seen the Court, your manners must be naught; and if your manners are naught, you must be damned,' according to Touchstone's reasoning. The other cause lies rather deeper, and is so far better worth considering, perhaps. A student, then, that is, a man who condemns himself to toil for a length of time and through a number of volumes in order to arrive at a conclusion, naturally loses that smartness and ease which distinguish the gay and thoughtless rattler. There is a certain elasticity of movement and hey-day of the animal spirits seldom to be met with but in those who have never cared for any thing beyond the moment, or looked lower than the surface. The scholar having to encounter doubts and difficulties on all hands, and indeed to apply by way of preference to those subjects which are most beset with mystery, becomes hesitating, sceptical, irresolute, absent, dull. All the processes of his mind are slow, cautious, circuitous, instead of being prompt, heedless, straightforward. Finding the intricacies of the path increase upon him in every direction, this can hardly be supposed to add to the lightness of his step, the confidence of his brow as he advances. He does not skim the surface, but dives under it like the mole to make his way darkling, by imperceptible degrees, and throwing up heaps of dirt and rubbish over his head to track his progress. He is therefore startled at

any sudden light, puzzled by any casual question, taken unawares and at a disadvantage in every critical emergency. He must have time given him to collect his thoughts, to consider objections, to make farther inquiries, and come to no conclusion at last. This is very different from the dashing, *off-hand* manner of the mere man of business or fashion; and he who is repeatedly found in situations to which he is unequal (particularly if he is of a reflecting and candid temper) will be apt to look foolish, and to lose both his countenance and his confidence in himself—at least as to the opinion others entertain of him, and the figure he is likely on any occasion to make in the eyes of the world. The course of his studies has not made him wise, but has taught him the uncertainty of wisdom; and has supplied him with excellent reasons for suspending his judgment, when another would throw the casting-weight of his own presumption or interest into the scale.

The inquirer after truth learns to take nothing for granted; least of all, to make an assumption of his own superior merits. He would have nothing proceed without proper proofs and an exact scrutiny; and would neither be imposed upon himself, nor impose upon others by shallow and hasty appearances. It takes years of patient toil and devoted enthusiasm to master any art or science; and after all, the success is doubtful. He infers that other triumphs must be prepared in like manner at an humble distance: he cannot bring himself to imagine that any object worth seizing on or deserving of regard, can be carried by a *coup de main*. So far from being proud or puffed up by them, he would be ashamed and degraded in his own opinion by any advantages that were to be obtained by such cheap and vulgar means as putting a good face on the matter, as strutting and vapouring about his own pretensions. He would not place himself on a level with bullies or coxcombs; nor believe that those whose favour he covets, can be the dupes of either. Whatever is excellent in his fanciful creed is hard of attainment; and he would (perhaps absurdly enough) have the means in all cases answerable to the end. He knows that there are difficulties in his favourite pursuits to puzzle the will, to tire the patience, to unbrace the strongest nerves, and make the stoutest courage quail; and he would fain think that if there is any object more worthy than another to call forth the earnest solicitude, the hopes and fears of a wise man, and to make his heart yearn within him at the most distant prospect of success, this precious prize in the grand lottery of life is not to be had for the asking for, or from the mere easy indifference or overbearing effrontery with which you put in your claim. He is aware that it will be long enough before any one paints a fine picture by walking

up and down and admiring himself in the glass; or writes a fine poem by being delighted with the sound of his own voice; or solves a single problem in philosophy by swaggering and haughty airs. He conceives that it is the same with the way of the world—woos the fair as he woos the Muse; in conversation never puts in a word till he has something better to say than any one else in the room; in business never strikes while the iron is hot, and flings away all his advantages by endeavouring to prove to his own and the satisfaction of others, that he is clearly entitled to them. It never once enters into his head (till it is too late) that impudence is the current coin in the affairs of life; that he who doubts his own merit, never has credit given him by others; that Fortune does not stay to have her overtures canvassed; that he who neglects opportunity, can seldom command it a second time; that the world judge by appearances, not by realities; and that they sympathise more readily with those who are prompt to do themselves justice, and to show off their various qualifications or enforce their pretensions to the utmost, than with those who wait for others to award their claims, and carry their fastidious refinement into helplessness and imbecility. Thus 'fools rush in where angels fear to tread;' and modest merit finds to its cost, that the bold hand and dauntless brow succeed where timidity and bashfulness are pushed aside; that the gay, laughing eye is preferred to dejection and gloom, health and animal spirits to the shattered, sickly frame and trembling nerves; and that to succeed in life, a man should carry about with him the outward and incontrovertible signs of success, and of his satisfaction with himself and his prospects, instead of plaguing every body near him with fantastical scruples and his ridiculous anxiety to realise an unattainable standard of perfection. From holding back himself, the speculative enthusiast is thrust back by others: his pretensions are insulted and trampled on; and the repeated and pointed repulses he meets with, make him still more unwilling to encounter, and more unable to contend with those that await him in the prosecution of his career. He therefore retires from the contest altogether, or remains in the back-ground, a passive but uneasy spectator of a scene, in which he finds from experience, that confidence, alertness, and superficial acquirements are of more avail than all the refinement and delicacy in the world. Action, in truth, is referable chiefly to quickness and strength of resolution, rather than to depth of reasoning or scrupulous nicety: again, it is to be presumed that those who show a proper reliance on themselves, will not betray the trust we place in them through pusillanimity or want of spirit: in what relates to the opinion of others, which is often formed hastily and on slight acquaintance,

much must be allowed to what strikes the senses, to what excites the imagination; and in all popular worldly schemes, popular and worldly means must be resorted to, instead of depending wholly on the hidden and intrinsic merits of the case.

> 'In peace, there 's nothing so becomes a man
> As modest stillness, and humility:
> But when the blast of war blows in our ears,
> Then imitate the action of the tyger;
> Stiffen the sinews, summon up the blood,
> Disguise fair nature with hard-favour'd rage:
> Then lend the eye a terrible aspect;
> Let it pry through the portage of the head,
> Like the brass cannon; let the brow o'erwhelm it,
> As fearfully, as doth a galled rock
> O'erhang and jutty his confounded base,
> Swill'd with the wild and wasteful ocean.'

This advice (sensible as it is) is abhorrent to the nature of a man who is accustomed to place all his hopes of victory in reasoning and reflection only. The noisy, rude, gratuitous success of those who have taken so much less pains to deserve it, disgusts and disheartens him—he loses his self-possession and self-esteem, has no standard left by which to measure himself or others, and as he cannot be brought to admire them, persuades himself at last that the blame rests with himself; and instead of bespeaking a fashionable dress, learning to bow, or taking a few lessons in boxing or fencing to brace his nerves and raise his spirits, aggravates all his former faults by way of repairing them, grows more jealous of the propriety of every word and look, lowers his voice into a whisper, gives his style the last polish, reconsiders his arguments, refines his sentiments till they evaporate in a sigh, and thus satisfies himself that he can hardly fail, that men judge impartially in the end, that the public will sooner or later do him justice, Fortune smile, and the Fair no longer be averse! *Oh malore!* He is just where he was, or ten times worse off than ever.

There is another circumstance that tends not a little to perplex the judgment, and add to the difficulties of the retired student, when he comes out into the world. He is like one dropped from the clouds. He has hitherto conversed chiefly with historic personages and abstract propositions, and has no just notion of actual men and things. He does not well know how to reconcile the sweeping conclusions he has been taught to indulge in to the cautious and pliant maxims of the world, nor how to compare himself, an inhabi-

tant of Utopia, with sublunary mortals. He has been habituated all his life to look up to a few great names handed down by virtue or science as the 'Gods of his idolatry,' as the fixed stars in the firmament of reputation, and to have some respect for himself and other learned men as votaries at the shrine and as appreciating the merits of their idol; but all the rest of the world, who are neither the objects of this sort of homage, nor concerned as a sort of priesthood in collecting and paying it, he looks upon as actually nobody, or as worms crawling upon the face of the earth without intellectual value or pretensions. He is, therefore, a little surprised and shocked to find, when he deigns to mingle with his fellows, those every-day mortals, on ordinary terms, that they are of a height nearly equal to himself, that they have words, ideas, feelings in common with the best, and are not the mere cyphers he had been led to consider them. From having under-rated, he comes to over-rate them. Having dreamt of no such thing, he is more struck with what he finds than perhaps it deserves; magnifies the least glimpse of sense or humour into sterling wit or wisdom; is startled by any objection from so unexpected a quarter; thinks his own advantages of no avail, because they are not the only ones, and shrinks from an encounter with weapons he has not been used to, and from a struggle by which he feels himself degraded. The Knight of La Mancha when soundly beaten by the packstaves of the Yanguesian carriers, laid all the blame on his having condescended to fight with plebeians. The pride of learning comes in to aid the awkwardness and bashfulness of the inexperienced novice, converting his want of success into the shame and mortification of defeat in what he habitually considers as a contest with inferiors. Indeed, those will always be found to submit with the worst grace to any check or reverse of this kind in common conversation or reasoning, who have been taught to set the most exclusive and disproportioned value on letters: and the most enlightened and accomplished scholars will be less likely to be humbled or put to the blush by the display of common sense or native talent, than the more ignorant, self-sufficient, and pedantic among the learned; for that ignorance, self-sufficiency, and pedantry, are sometimes to be reckoned among the attributes of learning, cannot be disputed. These qualities are not very reconcilable with modest merit; but they are quite consistent with a great deal of blundering, confusion, and want of *tact* in the commerce of the world. The genuine scholar retires from an unequal conflict into silence and obscurity: the pedant swells into self-importance, and renders himself conspicuous by pompous arrogance and absurdity!

It is hard upon those who have ever taken pains or done any thing

to distinguish themselves, that they are seldom the trumpeters of their own achievements; and I believe it may be laid down as a rule, that we receive just as much homage from others as we exact from them by our own declarations, looks, and manner. But no one who has performed any thing great looks big upon it: those who have any thing to boast of are generally silent on that head, and altogether shy of the subject. With Coriolanus, they 'will not have their nothings monster'd.' From familiarity, his own acquirements do not appear so extraordinary to the individual as to others; and there is a natural want of sympathy in this respect. No one who is really capable of great things is proud or vain of his success; for he thinks more of what he had hoped or has failed to do, than of what he has done. A habit of extreme exertion, or of anxious suspense, is not one of buoyant, overweening self-complacency: those who have all their lives tasked their faculties to the utmost, may be supposed to have quite enough to do without having much disposition left to anticipate their success with confidence, or to glory in it afterwards. The labours of the mind, like the drudgery of the body, depress and take away the usual alacrity of the spirits. Nor can such persons be lifted up with the event; for the impression of the consequences to result from any arduous undertaking must be light and vain, compared with the toil and anxiety accompanying it. It is only those who have done nothing, who fancy they can do every thing; or who have leisure and inclination to admire themselves. To sit before a glass and smile delighted at our own image, is merely a tax on our egotism and self-conceit; and these are resources not easily exhausted in some persons; or if they are, the deficiency is supplied by flatterers who surround the vain, like a natural atmosphere. Fools who take all their opinions at second-hand cannot resist the coxcomb's delight in himself; or it might be said that folly is the natural mirror of vanity. The greatest heroes, it has often been observed, do not show it in their faces; nor do philosophers affect to be thought wise. Little minds triumph on small occasions, or over puny competitors: the loftiest wish for higher opportunities of signalising themselves, or compare themselves with those models that leave them no room for flippant exultation. Either great things are accomplished with labour and pains, which stamp their impression on the general character and tone of feeling; or if this should not be the case (as sometimes happens), and they are the effect of genius and a happiness of nature, then they cost too little to be much thought of, and we rather wonder at others for admiring them, than at ourselves for having performed them. 'Vix ea nostra voco'—is the motto of spontaneous talent; and in neither

case is conceit the exuberant growth of great original power or of great attainments.

In one particular, the uneducated man carries it hollow against the man of thought and refinement: the first can shoot in the *long bow*, which the last cannot for the life of him. He who has spent the best part of his time and wasted his best powers in endeavouring to answer the question—'What is truth?'—scorns a lie, and every thing making the smallest approach to one. His mind by habit has become tenacious of, devoted to the truth. The grossness and vulgarity of falsehood shock the delicacy of his perceptions, as much as it would shock the finest artist to be obliged to daub in a sign-post, or scrawl a caricature. He cannot make up his mind to derive any benefit from so pitiful and disgusting a source. Tell me that a man is a metaphysician, and at the same time that he is given to shallow and sordid boasting, and I will not believe you. After striving to raise himself to an equality with truth and nature by patient investigation and refined distinctions (which few can make)—whether he succeed or fail, he cannot stoop to acquire a spurious reputation, or to advance himself or lessen others by paltry artifice and idle rhodomontade, which are in every one's power who has never known the value or undergone the labour of discovering a single truth. Gross personal and local interests bear the principal sway with the ignorant or mere man of the world, who considers not what things are in themselves, but what they are to him: the man of science attaches a higher importance to, because he finds a more constant pleasure in the contemplation and pursuit of general and abstracted truths. Philosophy also teaches self-knowledge; and self-knowledge strikes equally at the root of any inordinate opinion of ourselves, or wish to impress others with idle admiration. Mathematicians have been remarked for persons of strict probity and a conscientious and somewhat literal turn of mind.[1] But are poets and romance-writers equally scrupulous and severe judges of themselves, and martyrs to right principle? I cannot acquit them of the charge of vanity, and a wish to aggrandise themselves in the eyes of the world, at the expense of a little false complaisance (what wonder when the world are so prone to admire, and they are so spoiled by indulgence in self-pleasing fancies?)—but in general they are too much taken up with their *ideal* creations, which have also a truth and keeping of their own, to misrepresent or exaggerate matters of fact, or to trouble their heads about them. The poet's

[1] I have heard it said that carpenters, who do every thing by the square and line, are honest men, and I am willing to suppose it. Shakspeare, in the 'Midsummer Night's Dream,' makes Snug the Joiner the *moral* man of the piece.

waking thoughts are dreams: the liar has all his wits and senses about him, and thinks only of astonishing his hearers by some worthless assertion, a mixture of impudence and cunning. But what shall we say of the clergy and the priests of all countries? Are they not men of learning? And are they not, with few exceptions, noted for imposture and time-serving, much more than for a love of truth and candour? They are good subjects, it is true; bound to keep the peace, and hired to maintain certain opinions, not to inquire into them. So this is an exception to the rule, such as might be expected. I speak of the natural tendencies of things, and not of the false bias that may be given to them by their forced combination with other principles.

The worst effect of this depression of spirits, or of the 'scholar's melancholy,' here spoken of, is when it leads a man, from a distrust of himself, to seek for low company, or to forget it by matching below himself. Gray is to be pitied, whose extreme diffidence or fastidiousness was such as to prevent his associating with his fellow collegians, or mingling with the herd, till at length, like the owl, shutting himself up from society and daylight, he was hunted and hooted at like the owl whenever he chanced to appear, and was even assailed and disturbed in the haunts in which 'he held his solitary reign.' He was driven from college to college, and subjected to a persecution the more harassing to a person of his indolent and retired habits. But he only shrunk the more within himself in consequence —read over his favourite authors—corresponded with his distant friends—was terrified out of his wits at the bare idea of having his portrait prefixed to his works; and probably died from nervous agitation at the publicity into which his name had been forced by his learning, taste, and genius. This monastic seclusion and reserve is, however, better than a career such as Porson's; who from not liking the restraints, or not possessing the exterior recommendations of good society, addicted himself to the lowest indulgences, spent his days and nights in cider-cellars and pot-houses, cared not with whom or where he was, so that he had somebody to talk to and something to drink, 'from humble porter to imperial tokay' (*a liquid*, according to his own pun), and fell a martyr, in all likelihood, to what in the first instance was pure *mauvaise honte*. Nothing could overcome this propensity to low society and sotting, but the having something to do, which required his whole attention and faculties; and then he shut himself up for weeks together in his chambers, or at the University, to collate old manuscripts, or edite a Greek tragedy, or expose a grave pedant, without seeing a single boon-companion, or touching a glass of wine. I saw him once at the

London Institution with a large patch of coarse brown paper on his nose, the skirts of his rusty black coat hung with cobwebs, and talking in a tone of suavity approaching to condescension to one of the Managers. It is a pity that men should so lose themselves from a certain awkwardness and rusticity at the outset. But did not Sheridan make the same melancholy ending, and run the same fatal career, though in a higher and more brilliant circle? He did; and though not from exactly the same cause (for no one could accuse Sheridan's purple nose and flashing eye of a bashfulness—'modest as morning when she coldly eyes the youthful Phœbus!')—yet it was perhaps from one nearly allied to it, namely, the want of that noble independence and confidence in its own resources which should distinguish genius, and the dangerous ambition to get sponsors and vouchers for it in persons of rank and fashion. The affectation of the society of lords is as mean and low-minded as the love of that of coblers and tapsters. It is that coblers and tapsters may admire, that we wish to be seen in the company of *their* betters. The tone of literary patronage is better than it was a hundred or a hundred and fifty years ago. What dramatic author would think now of getting a lady of quality to take a box at the first night of a play to prevent its being damned by the pit? Do we not read the account of Parson Adams taking his ale in Squire Booby's kitchen with mingled incredulity and shame? At present literature has, to a considerable degree, found its level, and is hardly in danger, 'deprived of its natural patrons and protectors, the great and noble, of being trodden in the mire, and trampled under the hoofs of a swinish multitude' —though it can never again hope, to be what learning once was in the persons of the priesthood, the lord and sovereign of principalities and powers. Fool that it was ever to forego its privileges, and loosen the strong hold it had on opinion in bigotry and superstition!

I remember hearing a lady of great sense and acuteness speak of it as a painful consequence of the natural shyness of scholars, that from the want of a certain address, or an acquaintance with the common forms of society, they despair of making themselves agreeable to women of education and a certain rank in life, and throw away their fine sentiments and romantic tenderness on chambermaids and mantua-makers. Not daring to hope for success where it would be most desirable, yet anxious to realise in some way the dream of books and of their youth, they are willing to accept a return of affection which they count upon as a tribute of gratitude in those of lower circumstances, (as if gratitude were ever bought by interest), and take up with the first Dulcinea del Toboso that they meet with, when, would they only try the experiment, they might do much

better. Perhaps so: but there is here also a mixture of pride as well as modesty. The scholar is not only apprehensive of not meeting with a return of fondness where it might be most advantageous to him; but he is afraid of subjecting his self-love to the mortification of a repulse, and to the reproach of aiming at a prize far beyond his deserts. Besides, living (as he does) in an *ideal* world, he has it in his option to clothe his Goddess (be she who or what she may) with all the perfections his heart doats on; and he works up a dowdy of this ambiguous description *à son gré*, as an artist does a piece of dull clay, or the poet the sketch of some unrivalled heroine. The contrast is also the greater (and not the less gratifying as being his own discovery,) between his favourite figure and the back-ground of her original circumstances; and he likes her the better, inasmuch as, like himself, she owes all to her own merit—and *his* notice!

Possibly, the best cure for this false modesty, and for the uneasiness and extravagances it occasions, would be, for the retired and abstracted student to consider that he properly belongs to another sphere of action, remote from the scenes of ordinary life, and may plead the excuse of ignorance, and the privilege granted to strangers and to those who do not speak the same language. If any one is travelling in a foreign Diligence, he is not expected to shine nor to put himself forward, nor need he be out of countenance because he cannot: he has only to conform as well as he can to his new and temporary situation, and to study common propriety and simplicity of manners. Every thing has its own limits, a little centre of its own, round which it moves; so that our true wisdom lies in keeping to our own walk in life, however humble or obscure, and being satisfied if we can succeed in it. The best of us can do no more, and we shall only become ridiculous or unhappy by attempting it. We are ashamed, because we are at a loss in things to which we have no pretensions, and try to remedy our mistakes by committing greater. An overweening vanity or self-opinion is, in truth, often at the bottom of this weakness; and we shall be most likely to conquer the one by eradicating the other, or restricting it within due and moderate bounds.

# THE MAIN-CHANCE.

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> 'Search then the ruling passion: there alone,
> The wild are constant, and the cunning known;
> The fool consistent, and the false sincere;
> Priests, princes, women, no dissemblers here.
> This clue once found unravels all the rest,
> The prospect clears, and Wharton stands confest.'
>
> POPE.

I AM one of those who do not think that mankind are exactly governed by reason or a cool calculation of consequences. I rather believe that habit, imagination, sense, passion, prejudice, words make a strong and frequent diversion from the right line of prudence and wisdom. I have been told, however, that these are merely the irregularities and exceptions, and that reason forms the rule or basis; that the understanding, instead of being the sport of the capricious and arbitrary decisions of the will, generally dictates the line of conduct it is to pursue, and that self-interest, or the *main-chance*, is the unvarying load-star of our affections, or the chief ingredient in all our motives, that, thrown in as ballast, gives steadiness and direction to our voyage through life. I will not take upon me to give a verdict in this cause as judge; but I will try to plead one side of it as an advocate, perhaps a biassed and feeble one.

As the passions are said to be subject to the control of reason, and as reason is resolved (in the present case) into an attention to our own interest, or a practical sense of the value of money, it will not be amiss to inquire how much of this principle itself is founded in a rational estimate of things, or is calculated for the end it proposes, or how much of it will turn out (when analysed) to be mere madness and folly or a mixture, like all the rest, of obstinacy, whim, fancy, vanity, ill-nature, and so forth, or a nominal pursuit of good. This passion, or an inordinate love of wealth, shows itself, when it is strong, equally in two opposite ways, in saving or in spending—in avarice (or stinginess) and in extravagance. To examine each of their order. That lowest and most familiar form of covetousness, commonly called *stinginess*, is at present (it must be owned) greatly on the wane in civilised society; it has been driven out of fashion either by ridicule and good sense, or by the spread of luxury, or by supplying the mind with other sources of interest, besides those which related to the bare means of subsistence, so that it may almost be considered as a vice,

or absurdity, struck off the list, as a set-off to some that, in the change of manners and the progress of dissipation have been brought upon the stage. It is not, however, so entirely banished from the world, but that examples of it may be found to our purpose. It seems to have taken refuge in the petty provincial towns, or in old baronial castles in the North of Scotland, where it is still triumphant. To go into this subject somewhat in detail, as a study of the surviving manners of the last age.—Nothing is more common in these half-starved, barren regions, than to stint the servants in their wages, to allowance them in the merest necessaries, never to indulge them with a morsel of savoury food, and to lock up every thing from them as if they were thieves, or common vagabonds, broke into the house. The natural consequence is, that the mistresses live in continual *hot water* with their servants, keep watch and ward over them—the pantry is in a state of siege—grudge them every mouthful, every appearance of comfort, or moment of leisure, and torment their own souls every minute of their lives about what, if left wholly to itself, would not make a difference of five shillings at the year's end. There are families so notorious for this kind of *surveillance* and meanness, that no servant will go to live with them; for, to clench the matter, they are obliged to stay if they do; as, under these amiable establishments, and to provide against an evasion of their signal advantages, domestics are never hired but by the half-year. Instances have been known where servants have taken a pleasant revenge on their masters and mistresses without intending it; but where the example of sordid saving and meanness set to them, having taken possession of those even who were victims to it, they have conscientiously applied it to the benefit of all parties, and scarcely suffered a thing to enter the house for the whole six months they stayed in it. To pass over, however, those cases which may plead poverty as their excuse, what shall we say to a lady of fortune (the sister of one of their old-fashioned lairds) allowing the fruit to rot in the gardens and hot-houses of a fine old mansion in large quantities, sooner than let any of it be given away in presents to the neighbours; and, when peremptorily ordered by the master of the house to send a basket-full every morning to a sick friend, purchasing a small pottle for the purpose, and satisfying her mind (an intelligent and well-informed one) with this miserable subterfuge? Nay, farther, the same person, whenever they had green-peas, or other rarities, served up at table, could hardly be prevailed on to help the guests to them, but, if possible, sent them away, though no other use could now be made of them, and she would never see them again! Is there common sense in this; or is it not more like madness? But is it not, at the same time, human

nature? Let us stop to explain a little. In my view, the real motive of action in this and other similar cases of grasping penuriousness has no more reference to self-love (properly so called) than artificial fruit and flowers have to natural ones. A certain form or outside appearance of utility may deceive the mind, but the natural, pulpy, wholesome, nutritious substance, the principle of vitality is gone. To this callous, frigid habit of mind, the real uses of things harden and crystallise; the pith and marrow are extracted out of them, and leave nothing but the husk or shell. By a regular process, the idea of property is gradually abstracted from the advantage it may be of even to ourselves; and to a well-drilled, thorough-bred, Northern housekeeper (such as I have supposed), the fruits, or other produce of her garden, would come at last to be things no more to be eaten or enjoyed, than her jewels or trinkets of any description, which are, professedly, of no use but to be *kept* as symbols of wealth, to be occasionally looked at, and carefully guarded from the approach of any unhallowed touch. The calculation of consequences, or of benefit to accrue to any living person, is so far from being the mainspring in this mechanical operation that it is never once thought of, or regarded with peevishness and impatience as an unwelcome intruder, because it must naturally divert the mind from the warped and false bias it has taken. The feeling of property is here, then, removed from the sphere of practice to a chimerical and fictitious one. In the case of not sending the fruit out of the house, there might be some lurking idea of its being possibly wanted at home, that it might be sent to some one else, or made up into conserves: but when different articles of food are actually placed on the table, to hang back from using or offering them to others, is a deliberate infatuation. They *must be* destroyed, they *could not* appear again; and yet this person's heart failed her, and shrank back from the only opportunity of making the proper use of them with a petty, sensitive apprehension, as if it were a kind of sacrilege done to a cherished and favourite object. The impulse to save was become, by indulgence, a sort of desperate propensity and forlorn hope, no longer the understood means, but the mistaken end: habit had completely superseded the exercise and control of reason, and the rage of making the most of every thing *by making no use of it at all*, resisted to the last moment the shocking project of feasting on a helpless dish of green-peas (that *would* fetch so much in the market) as an outrage against the Goddess of stinginess, and torture to the soul of thrift! The principle of economy is inverted; and in order to avoid the possibility of wasting any thing, the way with such philosophers and housewives is to abstain from touching it altogether. Is not this a common error?

Or are we conscious of our motives in such cases? [Or do we not flatter ourselves by imputing every such act of idle folly to the necessity of adopting some sure and judicious plan to shun ruin, beggary, and the most profligate abuse of wealth? An old maid in the same northern school of humanity calling upon some young ladies, her neighbours, was so alarmed and scandalized at finding the *safe* open in their absence, that she engaged herself to drink tea the same afternoon, for the express purpose of reading them a lecture on the unheard-of imprudence and impropriety of such an example, and was mobbed on her way home by the poor servant-girl (who had been made the subject of her declamation) in return for her uncalled-for interference. *She* had nothing to fear, nothing to lose: *her* safe was carefully locked up. Why then all this flutter, fidgetty anxiety, and itch of meddling? Out of pure romantic generosity—because the idea of any thing like comfort or liberality to a servant shocked her economical and screwed-up prejudices as much as the impugning any article of her religious or moral creed could have done. The very truisms and literal refinements of this passion are then sheer impertinence. The housekeeper came into the parlour of a '*big ha' house*,' in the same land of cakes and hospitality, to say that the workmen had refused to eat their dinner.—'Why so?'—Because there was nothing but sowins and sour milk.—'Then they must go without a dinner,' said the young mistress delighted; 'there is nothing else in the house for them.' Yet the larder at that time groaned with cold rounds of beef, hams, pasties, and the other plentiful remains of a huge entertainment the day before. This was flippancy and ill-nature, as well as a wrong notion of self-interest. Is it at all wonderful that a decent servant-girl, when applied to to go to this place, laughed at the idea of a service where there was nothing to eat? Yet this attention to the *main-chance* on her part, had it come to the lady's knowledge, would have been treated as a great piece of insolence. So little conception have such people of their own obligations on the claims of others! The clergyman of the parish (prolific in this sort of anecdote), a hearty, good sort of man enough, but irritable withal, took it into his head to fly into a violent passion if ever he found the glasses or spoons left out in the kitchen, and he always went into the kitchen to look after this sort of excitement. He pretended to be mightily afraid that the one would be broken (to his irreparable loss) and the other stolen, though there was no danger of either: he wanted an excuse to fret and fume about something. On the death of his wife he sent for her most intimate friend to condole and consult with, and having made some necessary arrangements, begged as a peculiar favour that she would look into the kitchen to see if the

glasses and silver spoons were in their places. She repressed a smile at such a moment out of regard to his feelings, which were serious and acute; but burst into a fit of unrestrained laughter as soon as she got home. So ridiculous a thing is human nature, even to ourselves! Either our actions are absurd, or we are absurd in our constant censure and exposure of others. I would not from choice go into these details, but I might be required to fill up a vague outline; and the examples of folly, spite, and meanness are unfortunately 'sown like a thick scurf o'er life!']

Let us turn the tables and look at the other side of this sober, solid, ingrossing passion for property and its appendages. A man lays out a thousand, nay, sometimes many thousand pounds in purchasing a fine picture. This is thought, by the vulgar, a very fantastical folly, and unaccountable waste of money. Why so? No one would give such a sum for a picture, unless there were others ready to offer nearly the same sum, and who are likely to appreciate its value, and envy him the distinction. It is then a sign of taste, a proof of wealth to possess it, it is an ornament and a luxury. If the same person lays out the same sum of money in building or purchasing a fine house, or enriching it with costly furniture, no notice is taken —this is supposed to be perfectly natural and in order. Yet both are equally gratuitous pieces of extravagance, and the value of the objects is, in either case, equally *ideal*. It will be asked, 'But what is the use of the picture?' And what, pray, is the use of the fine house or costly furniture, unless to be looked at, to be admired, and to display the taste and magnificence of the owner? Are not pictures and statues as much furniture as gold plate or jasper tables; or does the circumstance of the former having a meaning in them, and appealing to the imagination as well as to the senses, neutralize their virtue, and render it entirely chimerical and visionary? It is true, every one must have a house of some kind, furnished somehow, and the superfluity so far grows imperceptibly out of the necessary. But a fine house, fine furniture, is necessary to no man, nor of more value than the plainest, except as a matter of taste, of fancy, of luxury and ostentation. Again, no doubt, if a person is in the habit of keeping a number of servants, and entertaining a succession of fashionable guests, he must have more room than he wants for himself, apartments suitably decorated to receive them, and offices and stables for their horses and retinue. But is all this unavoidably dictated as a consequence of his attention to the *main-chance*, or is it not sacrificing the latter, and making it a stalking-horse to his vanity, dissipation, or love of society and hospitality? We are at least as fond of spending money as of making it. If a man runs through a fortune in the way

here spoken of, is it out of love to himself? Yet who scruples to run through a fortune in this way, or accuses himself of any extraordinary disinterestedness or love of others? One bed is as much as any one can sleep in, one room is as much as he can dine in, and he may have another for study or to retire to after dinner—but he can only want more than this for the accommodation of his friends, or the admiration of strangers. At Fonthill Abbey (to take an extreme illustration), there was not a single room fit to sit, lie, or stand in: the whole was cut up into pigeon holes, or spread out into long endless galleries. The building this huge, ill-assorted pile cost, I believe, nearly a million of money; and if the circumstance was mentioned, it occasioned an expression of surprise at the amount of the wealth that had been thus squandered—but if it was said that a hundred pounds had been laid out on a highly-finished picture, there was the same astonishment expressed at its misdirection. The sympathetic auditor makes up his mind to the first and greatest loss, by reflecting that in case of the worst the building materials alone will fetch something considerable; or, in the very idea of stone walls and mortar there is something solid and tangible, that repels the charge of frivolous levity or fine sentiment. This quaint excrescence in architecture, preposterous and ill-contrived as it was, occasioned, I suspect, many a heart-ache and bitter comparison to the throng of fashionable visitants; and I conceive it was the very want of comfort and convenience that enhanced this feeling, by magnifying, as it were from contrast, the expense that had been incurred in realising an idle whim. When we judge thus perversely and invidiously of the employment of wealth by others, I cannot think that we are guided in our own choice of means to ends by a simple calculation of downright use and personal accommodation. The gentleman who purchased Fonthill, and was supposed to be possessed of wealth enough to purchase half a dozen more Fonthills, lived there himself for some time in a state of the greatest retirement, rose at six and read till four, rode out for an hour for the benefit of the air, and dined abstemiously for the sake of his health. I could do all this myself. What then became of the rest of his fortune? It was lying in the funds, or embarked in business to make it yet greater, that he might still rise at six and read till four, &c.—it was of no other earthly use to him; for he did not wish to make a figure in the world, or to throw it away on studs of horses, on equipages, entertainments, gaming, electioneering, subscriptions to charitable institutions, [mistresses,] or any of the usual fashionable modes of squandering wealth for the amusement and wonder of others and our own fancied enjoyment. Mr. F. did not probably lay out five hundred a-year on

himself: it cost Mr. Beckford, who led a life of perfect seclusion, twenty thousand a-year to defray the expenses of his table and of his household establishment. When I find that such and so various are the tastes of men, I am a little puzzled to know what is meant by self-interest, of which some persons talk so fluently, as if it was a *Jack-in-a-Box* which they could take out and show you, and which they tell you is the object that all men equally aim at. If money, is it for its own sake or the sake of other things? Is it to hoard it or to spend it, on ourselves or others? In all these points, we find the utmost diversity and contradiction both of feeling and practice. Certainly, he who puts his money into a strong-box, and he who puts it into a dice-box must be allowed to have a very different idea of the *main-chance*. If by this phrase be understood a principle of self-preservation, I grant that while we live, we must not starve, and that *necessity has no law*. Beyond this point, all seems nearly left to chance or whim; and so far are all the world from being agreed in their definition of this redoubtable term, that one half of them may be said to think and act in diametrical opposition to the other.

Avarice is the miser's dream, as fame is the poet's. A calculation of physical profit or loss is almost as much out of the question in the one case as in the other. The one has set his mind on gold, the other on praise, as the *summum bonum* or object of his bigoted idolatry and darling contemplation, not for any private and sinister ends. It is the immediate pursuit, not the remote or reflex consequence that gives wings to the passion. There is, indeed, a reference to self in either case that fixes and concentrates it, but not a gross or sordid one. Is not the desire to accumulate and leave a vast estate behind us equally romantic with the desire to leave a posthumous name behind us? Is not the desire of distinction, of something to be known and remembered by, the paramount consideration? And are not the privations we undergo, the sacrifices and exertions we make for either object, nearly akin? A child makes a huge snow-ball to show his skill and perseverance and as something to wonder at, not that he can swallow it as an ice, or warm his hands at it, and though the next day's sun will dissolve it; and the man accumulates a pile of wealth for the same reason principally, or to find employment for his time, his imagination, and his will. I deny that it can be of any other use to him to watch and superintend the returns of millions, than to watch the returns of the heavenly bodies, or to calculate their distances, or to contemplate eternity, or infinity, or the sea, or the dome of St. Peter's, or any other object that excites curiosity and interest from its magnitude and importance. Do we not look at the most barren

mountain with thrilling awe and wonder? And is it strange that we should gaze at a mountain of gold with satisfaction, when we can besides say, 'This is ours, with all the power that belongs to it?' Every passion, however plodding and prosaic, has its poetical side to it. A miser is the true alchemist, or, like the magician in his cell, who overlooks a mighty experiment, who sees dazzling visions, and who wields the will of others at his nod; but to whom all other hopes and pleasures are dead, and who is cut off from all connexion with his kind. He lives in a splendid hallucination, a waking trance, and so far it is well: but if he thinks he has any other need or use for all this endless store (any more than to swill the ocean) he deceives himself, and is no conjuror after all. He goes on, however, mechanically adding to his stock, and fancying that great riches is great gain, that every particle that swells the heap is something in reserve against the evil day, and a defence against that poverty which he dreads more, the farther he is removed from it; as the more giddy the height to which we have attained, the more frightful does the gulph yawn below—so easily does habit get the mastery of reason, and so nearly is passion allied to madness! 'But he is laying up for his heirs and successors.' In toiling for them, and sacrificing himself, is he properly attending to the *main-chance*?

This is the turn the love of money takes in cautious, dry, recluse, and speculative minds. If it were the pure and abstract love of money, it could take no other turn but this. But in a different class of characters, the sociable, the vain, and imaginative, it takes just the contrary one, *viz.* to expense, extravagance, and ostentation. It then loves to display itself in every fantastic shape and with every reflected lustre, in houses, in equipage, in dress, in a retinue of friends and dependants, in horses, in hounds—to glitter in the eye of fashion, to be echoed by the roar of folly, and buoyed up for a while like a bubble on the surface of vanity, to sink all at once and irrecoverably into an abyss of ruin and bankruptcy. Does it foresee this result? Does it care for it? What then becomes of the calculating principle that can neither be hood-winked nor bribed from its duty? Does it do nothing for us in this critical emergency? It is blind, deaf, and insensible to all but the noise, confusion, and glare of objects by which it is fascinated and lulled into a fatal repose! One man ruins himself by the vanity of associating with lords, another by his love of low company, one by his fondness for building, another by his rage for keeping open house and private theatricals, one by philosophical experiments, another by embarking in every ticklish and fantastic speculation that is proposed to him, one throws away an

estate on a law-suit, another on a die, a third on a horse-race, a fourth on *virtù*, a fifth on a drab, a sixth on a contested election, &c. There is no dearth of instances to fill the page, or complete the group of profound calculators and inflexible martyrs to the *main-chance*. Let any of these discreet and well-advised persons have the veil torn from their darling follies by experience, and be gifted with a double share of wisdom and a second fortune to dispose of, and each of them, so far from being warned by experience or disaster, will only be the more resolutely bent to assert the independence of his choice, and throw it away the self-same road it went before, on his vanity in associating with lords, on his love of low company, on his fondness for building, on his rage for keeping open house or private theatricals, on philosophical experiments, on fantastic speculations, on a law-suit, on a dice-box, on a favourite horse, on a picture, on a mistress, or election contest, and so on, through the whole of the chapter of accidents and cross-purposes. There is an admirable description of this sort of infatuation with folly and ruin in Madame D'Arblay's account of Harrel in 'Cecilia;' and though the picture is highly wrought and carried to the utmost length, yet I maintain that the principle is common. I myself have known more than one individual in the same predicament; and therefore cannot think that the deviations from the line of strict prudence and wisdom are so rare or trifling as the theory I am opposing represents them, or I must have been singularly unfortunate in my acquaintance. Out of a score of persons of this class I could mention several that have ruined their fortunes out of mere freak, others that are in a state of dotage and imbecility for fear of being robbed of all they are worth. The rest care nothing about the matter. So that this boasted and unfailing attention to the *main-chance* resolves itself, when strong, into mad profusion or griping penury, or if weak, is null and yields to other motives. Such is the conclusion, to which my observation of life has led me: if I am quite wrong, it is hard that in a world abounding in such characters I should not have met with a single practical philosopher.[1]

A girl in a country-town resolves never to marry any one under a duke or a lord. Good. This may be very well as an ebullition

[1] Mr. Bentham proposes to new-model the penal code, on the principle of a cool and systematic calculation of consequences. Yet of all philosophers, the candidates for Panopticons and Penitentiaries are the most short-sighted and refractory. Punishment has scarcely any effect upon them. Thieves steal under the scaffold; and if a person's previous feelings and habits do not prevent his running the risk of the gallows, assuredly the fear of consequences, or his having already escaped it, with all the good resolutions he may have made on the occasion, will not prevent his exposing himself to it a second time. It is true, most

of spleen or vanity; but is there much common sense or regard to her own satisfaction in it? Were there any likelihood of her succeeding in her resolution, she would not make it: for it is the very distinction to be attained that piques her ambition, and leads her to gratify her conceit of herself by affecting to look down on any lower matches. Let her suffer ever so much mortification or chagrin in the prosecution of her scheme, it only confirms her the more in it: the spirit of contradiction, and the shame of owning herself defeated, increase with every new disappointment and year of painful probation. At least this is the case while there is any chance left. But what, after all, is this haughty and ridiculous pretension founded on? Is it owing to a more commanding view and a firmer grasp of consequences, or of her own interest? No such thing: she is as much captivated by the fancied sound of 'my lady,' and dazzled by the image of a coronet-coach, as the girl who marries a footman is smit with his broad shoulders, laced coat, and rosy cheeks. 'But why must I be always in extremes? Few misses make vows of celibacy or marry their footmen.' Take then the broad question:—Do they generally marry from the convictions of the understanding, or make the choice that is most likely to ensure their future happiness, or that they themselves approve afterwards? I think the answer must be in the negative; and yet love and marriage are among the weightiest and most serious concerns of life. Mutual regard, good temper, good sense, good character, or a conformity of tastes and dispositions, have notoriously and lamentably little to say in it. On the contrary, it is most frequently those things that pique and provoke opposition, instead of those which promise concord and sympathy, that decide the choice and inflame the will by the love of conquest or of overcoming difficulty. Or it is a complexion, or a fine set of teeth, or air, or dress, or a fine person, or false calves, or affected consequence, or a reputation for gallantry, or a flow of spirits, or a flow of words, or forward coquetry, or assumed indifference, something that appeals to the senses, the fancy, or to our pride, and determines us to throw away our happiness for life. Neither in this case, on which so much depends, are the *main-chance* and our real interest by any means the same thing.

people have a natural aversion to being hanged. The perseverance of culprits in their evil courses seems a fatality, which is strengthened by the prospect of what is to follow. Mr. Bentham argues that all 'men act from calculation, even madmen reason.' So far it may be true that the world is not unlike a great Bedlam, or answers to the title of an old play—'A Mad World, my masters!' This is our world, but not his. Life, on looking back to it, too often resembles a disturbed dream, which does not infer its having been guided by reason in its progress.

'Now all ye ladies of fair Scotland,
And ladies of England that happy would prove,
Marry never for houses, nor marry for land,
Nor marry for nothing but only love.'[1]—*Old Ballad.*

Or take the passion of love where it has other objects and consequences in view. Is reason any match for the poison of this passion, where it has been once imbibed? I might just as well be told that reason is a cure for madness or the bite of a venomous serpent. Are not health, fortune, friends, character, peace of mind, every thing sacrificed to its idlest impulse? Are the instances rare, or are they not common and tragical? The *main-chance* does not serve the turn here. Does the prospect of certain ruin break the fascination to its frail victim, or does it not rather enhance and precipitate the result? Or does it not render the conquest more easy and secure that the seducer has already triumphed over and deserted a hundred other victims? A man *à bonnes fortunes* is the most irresistible personage in the lists of gallantry. Take drunkenness again, that vice which till within these few years (and even still) was fatal to the health, the constitution, the fortunes of so many individuals, and the peace of so many families in Great Britain. I would ask what remonstrance of friends, what lessons of experience, what resolutions of amendment, what certainty of remorse and suffering, however exquisite, would deter the confirmed sot (where the passion for this kind of excitement had once become habitual and the immediate want of it was felt) from indulging his propensity and taking his full swing, notwithstanding the severe and imminent punishment to follow upon his incorrigible excess? The consequence of not abstaining from his favourite beverage is not doubtful and distant (a thing in the clouds) but close at his side, staring him in the face, and felt perhaps in all its aggravations the very morning, yet the recollection of this and of the next day's dawn is of no avail against the momentary craving and headlong impulse given by the first application of the glass to his lips. The present temptation is indeed heightened by the threatened alternative. I know this as a rule, that the stronger the repentance, the surer the relapse and the more hopeless the cure! The being ingrossed by the present moment, by the present feeling, whatever it be, whether of pleasure or pain, is the

[1] ['Have I not seen a household where love was not?' says the author of the 'Betrothed;' 'where, although there was worth and good will, and enough of the means of life, all was imbittered by regrets, which were not only vain, but criminal?'—'I would take the *Ghost's* word for a thousand pound,' or in preference to that of any man living, though I was told in the streets of Edinburgh, that Dr. Jamieson, the author of the 'Dictionary,' was quite as great a man!]

evident cause of both. Few instances have been heard of, of a final reformation on this head. Yet it is a clear case; and reason, if it were that Giant that it is represented in any thing but ledgers and books of accounts, would put down the abuse in an instant. It is true, this infirmity is more particularly chargeable to the English and to other Northern nations, and there has been a considerable improvement among us of late years; but I suspect it is owing to a change of manners, and to the opening of new sources of amusement (without the aid of ardent spirits flung in to relieve the depression of our animal spirits,) more than to the excellent treatises which have been written against the 'Use of Fermented Liquors,' or to an increasing, tender regard to our own comfort, health, and happiness in the breast of individuals. We still find plenty of ways of tormenting ourselves and sporting with the feelings of others! I will say nothing of a passion for gaming here, as too obvious an illustration of what I mean. It is more rare, and hardly to be looked on as epidemic with us. But few that have dabbled in this vice have not become deeply involved, and few (or none) that have done so have ever retraced their steps or returned to sober calculations of the *main-chance*. The majority, it is true, are not gamesters; but where the passion does exist, it completely tyrannizes over and stifles the voice of common sense, reason, and humanity. How many victims has the point of honour! I will not pretend that, as matters stand, it may not be necessary to fight a duel, under certain circumstances and on certain provocations, even in a prudential point of view, (though this again proves how little the maxims and practices of the world are regulated by a mere consideration of personal safety and welfare)—but I do say that the rashness with which this responsibility is often incurred, and the even seeking for trifling causes of quarrel, shows any thing but a consistent regard to self-interest as a general principle of action, or rather betrays a total recklessness of consequences, when opposed to pique, petulance, or passion.

Before I proceed to answer a principal objection (and indeed a staggering one at first sight) I will mention here that I think it strongly confirms my view of human nature, that men form their opinions much more from prejudice than reason. The proof that they do so is that they form such opposite ones, when the abstract premises and independent evidence are the same. How few Calvinists become Lutherans! How few Papists Protestants! How few Tories Whigs![1] Each shuts his eyes equally to facts or arguments, and persists in the view of the subject that custom, pride, and

[1] *Certes* more Whigs become Tories. This may also be accounted for satisfactorily, though not very rationally.

obstinacy dictate. Interest is no more regarded than reason; for it is often at the risk both of life and fortune that these opinions have been maintained, and it is uniformly when parties have run highest and the strife has been deadliest that people have been most forward to stake their existence and every thing belonging to them, on some unintelligible dogma or article of an old-fashioned creed. Half the wars and fightings, martyrdoms, persecutions, feuds, antipathies, heart-burnings in the world have been about some distinction, 'some trick not worth an egg'—so ready are mankind to sacrifice their all to a mere name! It may be urged, that the good of our souls or our welfare in a future state of being is a rational and well-grounded motive for these religious extravagances. And this is true, so far as religious zeal falls in with men's passions or the spirit of the times. A bigot was formerly ready to cut his neighbour's throat to go to Heaven, but not so ready to reform his own life, or give up a single vice or gratification for all the pains and penalties denounced upon it, and of which his faith in Holy Church did not suffer him to doubt a moment!

But it is contended here, that in matters not of doctrinal speculation but of private life and domestic policy, every one consults and understands his own interest; that whatever other *hobbies* he may have, he minds this as the main-object, and contrives to make both ends meet, in spite of seeming inattention and real difficulties. 'If we look around us' (says a shrewd, hard-headed Scotchman) 'and take examples from the neighbourhood in which we live, we shall find that allowing for occasional exceptions, diversities and singularities, the *main-chance* is still stuck to with rigid and unabated pertinacity—the accounts are wound up and every thing is right at the year's end, whatever freaks or fancies may have intervened in the course of it. The business of life goes on (which is the principal thing) and every man's house stands on its own bottom. This is the case in Nicholson-street, in the next street to it, and in the next street to that, and in the whole of Edinburgh, Scotland, and England to boot.' This, I allow, is a *home-thrust*, and I must parry it, how I can. It is a kind of heavy, broad-wheeled waggon of an objection that makes a formidable, awkward appearance, and takes up so much of the road, that I shall have a lucky escape if I can dash by it in my light travelling gig without being upset or crushed to atoms. The persons who in the present instance have the charge of it, in its progress through the streets of Edinburgh, are a constitutional lawyer, a political economist, an opposition editor, and an *ex-officio* surveyor of the Customs—fearful odds against one poor metaphysician! Their machine of human life, I confess, puts me a little in mind of those square-looking

caravans one sometimes meets on the road in which they transport wild beasts from place to place; and dull, heavy, safe, and flat as they look, the inmates continue their old habits, the monkeys play their tricks, and the panthers lick their jaws for human blood, though cramped and confined in their excursions. So the vices and follies, when they cannot break loose, do their worst *inside* this formal conveyance, the *main-chance*. As this ovation is to pass up High-street, for the honour of the Scottish capital, I should wish it to stop at the shop-door of Mr. Bartholine Saddletree, to see if he is at home or in the courts. Also, to inquire whether the suit of Peter Peebles is yet ended; and to take the opinion of counsel, how many of the Highland lairds or Scottish noblemen and gentlemen that were *out* in the fifteen and the forty-five, perilled their lives and fortunes in the good cause from an eye to the *main-chance*? The Baron of Bradwardine would have scorned such a suggestion; nay, it would have been below Balmawhapple or even Killancureit. But 'the age of chivalry is gone, and that of sophists, economists, and calculators has succeeded.' I should say that the risk, the secrecy, the possibility of the leaders having their heads stuck on Temple-Bar, and their estates confiscated, were among the foremost causes that inflamed their zeal and stirred their blood to the enterprise. Hardship, danger, exile, death,—these words 'smack of honour,' more than the *main-chance*. The modern Scotch may be loyal on this thriving principle: their ancestors found *their* loyalty a very losing concern. Yet they persevered in it till and long after it became a desperate cause. But patriotism and loyalty (true or false) are important and powerful principles in human affairs, though not always selfish and calculating. Honour is one great standard-bearer and puissant leader in the struggle of human life; and less than honour (a nickname or a bugbear) is enough to set the multitude together by the ears, whether in civil, religious, or private brawls. [But to return to our Edinburgh shop-keepers, those practical models of wisdom, and authentic epitomes of human nature. Say that by their 'canny ways and pawky looks' they keep their names out of the 'Gazette,' yet still care (not the less perhaps) mounts behind their counters, and sits in their back-shops. A tradesman is not a bankrupt at the year's end. But what does it signify, if he is hen-pecked in the mean time, or quarrels with his wife, or beats his apprentices, or has married a woman twice as old as himself for her money, or has been jilted by his maid, or fuddles himself every night, or is laying in an apoplexy by over-eating himself, or is believed by nobody, or is a furious Whig or Tory, or a knave, or a fool, or one envious of the success of his neighbours, or dissatisfied with his own, or surly, or eaten up with

indolence and procrastination, never easy but bashful and awkward in company (though with a vast desire to shine) or has some personal defect or weak side on which the Devil is sure to assail him, and the venting his spleen and irritability on which, through some loop-hole or other, makes the real business and torment of his life—that of his shop may go on as it pleases. Such is the perfection of reason and the triumph of the sovereign good, where there are no strong passions to disturb, or no great vices to sully it! The humours collect, the will will have head, the petty passions ferment, and we start some grievance or other, and hunt it down every hour in the day, or the machine of *still-life* could not go on even in North Britain. But were I to grant the full force and extent of the objection, I should still say that it does not bear upon my view of the subject or general assertion, that reason is an unequal match for passion. Business is a kind of gaoler or task-master, that keeps its vassals in good order while they are under its eye, as the slave or culprit performs his task with the whip hanging over him, and punishment immediately to follow neglect; but the question is, what he would do with his recovered freedom, or what course the mind will for the most part pursue, when in the range of its general conduct it has its choice to make between a distant, doubtful, sober, rational good (or *average* state of being), and some one object of comparatively little value, that strikes the senses, flatters our pride, gives scope to the imagination, and has all the strength of passion and inclination on its side. The *main-chance* then is a considerable exception, but not a fair one or a case in point, since it falls under a different head and line of argument.] The fault of reason in general, (which takes in the *whole* instead of *parts*,) is that objects, though of the utmost extent and importance, are not defined and tangible. This fault cannot be found with the pursuit of trade and commerce. It is not a mere dry, abstract, undefined, speculative, however steady and well-founded conviction of the understanding. It has other levers and pulleys to enforce it, besides those of reason and reflection. As follows:—

1. The value of money is positive or specific. The interest in it is a sort of mathematical interest, reducible to number and quantity. Ten is always more than one; a part is never greater than the whole; the good we seek or attain in this way has a technical denomination, and I do not deny that in matters of strict calculation, the principle of calculation will naturally bear great sway. The returns of profit and loss are regular and mechanical, and the operations of business, or the *main-chance*, are so too. But, commonly speaking, we judge by the *degree* of excitement, not by the ultimate quantity. Thus we

prefer a draught of nectar to the recovery of our health, [and are on most occasions ready to exclaim,—

'An ounce of sweet is worth a pound of sour.']

Yet there is a point at which self-will and humour stop. A man will take brandy, which is a *kind of slow poison*, but he will not take *actual* poison, knowing it to be such, however slow the operation or bewitching the taste; because here the effect is absolutely fixed and certain, not variable, nor in the power of the imagination to elude or trifle with it. I see no courage in battle, but in going on what is called the *forlorn hope*.

2. Business is also an affair of habit: it calls for incessant and daily application; and what was at first a matter of necessity to supply our wants, becomes often a matter of necessity to employ our time. The man of business wants work for his head; the labourer and mechanic for his hands; so that the love of action, of difficulty and competition, the stimulus of success or failure, is perhaps as strong an ingredient in men's ordinary pursuits as the love of gain. We find persons pursuing science, or any *hobby-horsical* whim or handicraft that they have taken a fancy to, or persevering in a losing concern, with just the same ardour and obstinacy. As to the choice of a pursuit in life, a man may not be forward to engage in business, but being once in, does not like to turn back amidst the pity of friends and the derision of enemies. How difficult is it to prevent those who have a turn for any art or science from going into these unprofitable pursuits! Nay, how difficult is it often to prevent those who have no turn that way, but prefer starving to a certain income! If there is one in a family brighter than the rest, he is immediately designed for one of the learned professions. Really, the dull and plodding people of the world have not much reason to boast of their superior wisdom or numbers: they are in an involuntary majority!

3. The value of money is an *exchangeable* value: that is, this pursuit is available towards and convertible into a great many others. A person is in want of money, and mortgages an estate, to throw it away upon a round of entertainments and company. The passion or motive here is not a hankering after money, but society, and the individual will ruin himself for this object. Another, who has the same passion for show and a certain style of living, tries to gain a fortune in trade to indulge it, and only goes to work in a more round-about way. I remember a story of a common mechanic at Manchester, who laid out the hard-earned savings of the week in hiring a horse and livery-servant to ride behind him to Stockport every Sunday, and to dine there at an ordinary like a gentleman. The

pains bestowed upon the *main-chance* here was only a cover for another object, which exercised a ridiculous predominance over his mind. Money will purchase a horse, a house, a picture, leisure, dissipation, or whatever the individual has a fancy for that is to be purchased; but it does not follow that he is fond of all these, or of whatever will promote his real interest, because he is fond of money, but that he has a passion for some one of these objects, to which he would probably sacrifice all the rest, and his own peace and happiness into the bargain.

4. The *main-chance* is an instrument of various passions, but is directly opposed to none of them, with the single exception of indolence or the *vis inertiæ*, which of itself is seldom strong enough to master it, without the aid of some other incitement. A barrister sticks to his duty as long as he has only his love of ease to prevent; but he flings up his briefs, or neglects them, if he thinks he can make a figure in Parliament. [A servant-girl stays in her place and does her work, though perhaps lazy and slatternly, because no immediate temptation occurs strong enough to interfere with the necessity of gaining her bread, but she goes away with a bastard-child, because here passion and desire come into play, though the consequence is that she loses not only her place, but her character and every prospect in life.] No one flings away the *main-chance* without a motive, any more than he voluntarily walks into the fire or breaks his neck out of window. A man must live; the first step is a point of necessity: every man would live well; the second is a point of luxury. The having, or even acquiring wealth does not prevent our enjoying it in various ways. A man may give his mornings to business, and his evenings to pleasure. There is no contradiction; nor does he sacrifice his ruling passion by this, any more than the man of letters by study, or the soldier by an attention to discipline. Reason and passion are opposed, not passion and business. The sot, the glutton, the debauchee, the gamester, must all have money, to make their own use of it, and they may indulge all these passions and their avarice at the same time. It is only when the last becomes the ruling passion that it puts a prohibition on the others. In that case, every thing else is lost sight of; but it is seldom carried to this length, or when it is, it is far from being another name, either in its means or ends, for reason, sense, or happiness, as I have already shown.

I have taken no notice hitherto of ambition or virtue, or scarcely of the pursuits of fame or intellect. Yet all these are important and respectable divisions of the map of human life. Who ever charged Mr. Pitt with a want of common sense, because he did not die worth a plum? Had it been proposed to Lord Byron to forfeit every penny

of his estate, or every particle of his reputation, would he have hesitated to part with the former? Is there not a loss of character, a stain upon honour, that is felt as a severer blow than any reverse of fortune? Do not the richest heiresses in the city marry for a title, and think themselves well off? Are there not patriots who think or dream all their lives about their country's good; philanthropists who rave about liberty and humanity at a certain yearly loss? Are there not studious men, who never once thought of bettering their circumstances? Are not the liberal professions held more respectable than business, though less lucrative? Might not most people do better than they do, but that they postpone their interest to their indolence, their taste for reading, their love of pleasure, or other pursuits? And is it not generally understood that all men can make a fortune or succeed in the *main-chance*, who have but that one idea in their heads?[1] Lastly, are there not those who pursue or husband wealth for their own good, for the benefit of their friends or the relief of the distressed? But as the examples are rare, and might be supposed to make against myself, I shall not insist upon them. I think I have said enough to vindicate or apologize for my first position—

> 'Masterless passion sways us to the mood
> Of what it likes or loaths—'

or if not to make good my ground, to march out with flying colours and beat of drum!

## SELF-LOVE AND BENEVOLENCE

*The New Monthly Magazine.*] [*October and December*, 1828.

*A.* For my part, I think Helvetius has made it clear that self-love is at the bottom of all our actions, even of those which are apparently the most generous and disinterested.

*B.* I do not know what you mean by saying that Helvetius has made this clear, nor what you mean by self-love.

*A.* Why, was not he the first who explained to the world that in gratifying others, we gratify ourselves; that though the result may be different, the motive is really the same, and a selfish one; and that if we had not more pleasure in performing what are called friendly or virtuous actions than the contrary, they would never enter our thoughts?

[1] I have said somewhere, that all professions that do not make money *breed* are careless and extravagant. This is not true of lawyers, &c. I ought to have said that this is the case with all those that by the regularity of their returns do not afford a prospect of realizing an independence by frugality and industry.

*B.* Certainly he is no more entitled to this discovery (if it be one) than you are. Hobbes and Mandeville long before him asserted the same thing in the most explicit and unequivocal manner; [1] and Butler, in the Notes and Preface to his Sermons, had also long before answered it in the most satisfactory way.

*A.* Ay, indeed! pray how so?

*B.* By giving the *common-sense* answer to the question which I have just asked of you.

*A.* And what is that? I do not exactly comprehend.

*B.* Why, that self-love means, both in common and philosophical speech, the love *of* self.

*A.* To be sure, *there needs no ghost to tell us that.*

*B.* And yet, simple as it is, both you and many great philosophers seem to have overlooked it.

*A.* You are pleased to be obscure—unriddle for the sake of the vulgar.

*B.* Well then, Bishop Butler's statement in the volume I have mentioned——

*A.* May I ask, is it the author of the *Analogy* you speak of?

*B.* The same, but an entirely different and much more valuable work. His position is, that the arguments of the opposite party go to prove that in all our motives and actions it is the individual indeed who loves or is interested in *something*, but not in the smallest degree (which yet seems necessary to make out the full import of the compound 'sound significant,' *self-love*) that that something is *himself*. By self-love is surely implied not only that it is I who feel a certain passion, desire, good-will, and so forth, but that I feel this good-will towards myself—in other words, that I am both the person feeling the attachment, and the object of it. In short, the controversy between self-love and benevolence relates not to the person who loves, but to the person beloved—otherwise, it is flat and puerile nonsense. There must always be some one to feel the love, that's certain, or else there could be no love of one thing or another—so far there can be no question that it is a given individual who feels, thinks, and acts in all possible cases of feeling, thinking, and acting —'there needs,' according to your own allusion, 'no ghost come

[1] 'Il a manqué au plus grand philosophe qu'aient eu les Francais, de vivre dans quelque solitude des Alpes, dans quelque séjour éloigné, et de lancer delà son livre dans Paris sans y venir jamais lui-même. Rousseau avait trop de sensibilité et trop peu de raison, Buffon trop d'hypocrisie à son jardin des plantes, Voltaire trop d'enfantillage dans la tête, pour pouvoir juger le principe d'Helvétius.'—*De l'Amour*, tom. 2. p. 230.

My friend Mr. Beyle here lays too much stress on a borrowed verbal fallacy.

from the grave to tell us that'—but whether the said individual in so doing always thinks *of*, feels *for*, and acts *with a view to himself*, that is a very important question, and the only real one at issue; and the very statement of which, in a distinct and intelligible form, gives at once the proper and inevitable answer to it. Self-love, to mean any thing, must have a double meaning, that is, must not merely signify love, but love defined and directed in a particular manner, having *self* for its object, reflecting and reacting upon *self*; but it is downright and intolerable trifling to persist that the love or concern which we feel for another still has self for its object, because it is we who feel it. The same sort of quibbling would lead to the conclusion that when I am thinking of any other person, I am notwithstanding thinking of myself, because it *I* who have his image in my mind.

*A.* I cannot, I confess, see the connection.

*B.* I wish you would point out the distinction. Or let me ask you—Suppose you were to observe me looking frequently and earnestly at myself in the glass, would you not be inclined to laugh, and say that this was vanity?

*A.* I might be half-tempted to do so.

*B.* Well; and if you were to find me admiring a fine picture, or speaking in terms of high praise of the person or qualities of another, would you not set it down equally to an excess of coxcombry and self-conceit?

*A.* How, in the name of common sense, should I do so?

*B.* Nay, how should you do otherwise upon your own principles? For if sympathy with another is to be construed into self-love because it is I who feel it, surely, by the same rule, my admiration and praise of another must be resolved into self-praise and self-admiration, and I am the whole time delighted with myself, to wit, with my own thoughts and feelings, while I pretend to be delighted with another. Another's limbs are as much mine, who contemplate them, as his feelings.

*A.* Now, my good friend, you go too far: I can't think you serious.

*B.* Do I not tell you that I have a most grave Bishop (equal to a whole Bench) on my side?

*A.* What! is this illustration of the looking-glass and picture his? I thought it was in your own far-fetched manner.

*B.* And why far-fetched?

*A.* Because nobody can think of calling the praise of another self-conceit—the words have a different meaning in the language.

*B.* Nobody has thought of confounding them hitherto, and yet they sound to me as like as selfishness and generosity. If our vanity

can be brought to admire others disinterestedly, I do not see but our good-nature may be taught to serve them as disinterestedly. Grant me but this, that self-love signifies not simply, 'I love,' but requires to have this further addition, 'I love *myself*,' understood in order to make sense or grammar of it, and I defy you to make one or the other of Helvetius's theory, if you will needs have it to be his. If, as Fielding says, all our passions are selfish merely because they are *ours*, then in hating another we must be said to hate ourselves, just as wisely as in loving another, we are said to be actuated by self-love. I have no patience with such foolery. I respect that fine old sturdy fellow Hobbes, or even the acute pertinacious sophistry of Mandeville; but I do not like the flimsy, self-satisfied repetition of an absurdity, which with its originality has lost all its piquancy.

*A.* You have, I know, very little patience with others who differ from you, nor are you a very literal reporter of the arguments of those who happen to be on your side of the question. You were about to tell me the substance of Butler's answer to Helvetius's theory, if we can let the anachronism pass; and I have as yet only heard certain quaint and verbal distinctions of your own. I must still think that the most disinterested actions proceed from a selfish motive. A man feels distress at the sight of a beggar, and he parts with his money to remove this uneasiness. If he did not feel this distress in his own mind, he would take no steps to relieve the other's wants.

*B.* And pray, does he feel this distress in his own mind out of love to himself, or solely that he may have the pleasure of getting rid of it? The first *move* in the game of mutual obligation is evidently a social, not a selfish impulse, and I might rest the dispute here and insist upon going no farther till this step is got over, but it is not necessary. I have already told you the substance of Butler's answer to this common-place and plausible objection. He says, in his fine broad manly and yet unpretending mode of stating a question, that a living being may be supposed to be actuated either by mere sensations, having no reference to any one else, or else that having an idea and foresight of the consequences to others, he is influenced by and interested in those consequences only in so far as they have a distinct connexion with his own ultimate good, in both which cases, seeing that the motives and actions have both their origin and end in self, they may and must be properly denominated *selfish*. But where the motive is neither physically nor morally selfish, that is, where the impulse to act is neither excited by a physical sensation nor by a reflection on the consequence to accrue to the individual, it must be hard to say in what sense it can be called so, except in that sense

already exploded, namely, that which would infer that an impulse of any kind is selfish merely because it acts upon some one, or that before we can entertain disinterested sympathy with another, we must feel no sympathy at all. Benevolence, generosity, compassion, friendship, &c. imply, says the Bishop, that we take an immediate and unfeigned interest in the welfare of others; that their pleasures give us pleasure; that their pains give us pain, barely to know of them, and from no thought about ourselves. But no! retort the advocates of self-love, this is not enough: before any person can pretend to the title of benevolent, generous, and so on, he must prove, that so far from taking the deepest and most heartfelt interest in the happiness of others, he has no feeling on the subject, that he is perfectly indifferent to their weal or woe; and then taking infinite pains and making unaccountable sacrifices for their good without caring one farthing about them, he might pass for heroic and disinterested. But if he lets it appear he has the smallest good-will towards them and acts upon it, he then becomes a merely selfish agent; so that to establish a character for generosity, compassion, humanity, &c. in any of his actions, he must first plainly prove that he never felt the slightest twinge of any of these passions thrilling in his bosom. This, according to my author, is requiring men to act not from charitable motives, but from no motives at all. Such reasoning has not an appearance of philosophy, but rather of drivelling weakness or of tacit irony. For my part, I can conceive of no higher strain of generosity than that which justly and truly says, *Nihil humani â me alienum puto*—but, according to your modern French friends and my old English ones, there is no difference between this and the most sordid selfishness; for the instant a man takes an interest in another's welfare, he makes it his own, and all the merit and disinterestedness is gone. 'Greater love than this hath no man, that he should give his life for his friend.' It must be rather a fanciful sort of self-love that at any time sacrifices its own acknowledged and obvious interests for the sake of another.

*A.* Not in the least. The expression you have just used explains the whole mystery, and I think you must allow this yourself. The moment I sympathise with another, I do in strictness make his interest my own. The two things on this supposition become inseparable, and my gratification is identified with his advantage. Every one, in short, consults his particular taste and inclination, whatever may be its bias, or acts from the strongest motive. Regulus, as Helvetius has so ably demonstrated, would not have returned to Carthage, but that the idea of dishonour gave him more uneasiness than the apprehension of a violent death.

*B.* That is, had he not preferred the honour of his country to his

own interest. Surely, when self-love by all accounts takes so very wide a range and embraces entirely new objects of a character so utterly opposed to its general circumscribed and paltry routine of action, it would be as well to designate it by some new and appropriate appellation, unless it were meant, by the intervention of the old and ambiguous term, to confound the important practical distinction which subsists between the puny circle of a man's physical sensations and private interests and the whole world of virtue and honour, and thus to bring back the last gradually and disingenuously within the verge of the former. Things without names are unapt to take root in the human mind: we are prone to reduce nature to the dimensions of language. If a feeling of a refined and romantic character is expressed by a gross and vulgar name, our habitual associations will be sure to degrade the first to the level of the last, instead of conforming to a forced and technical definition. But I beg to deny, not only that the objects in this case are the same, but that the principle is similar.

*A.* Do you then seriously pretend that the end of sympathy is not to get rid of the momentary uneasiness occasioned by the distress of another?

*B.* And has that uneasiness, I again ask, its source in self-love? If self-love were the only principle of action, we ought to receive no uneasiness from the pains of others, we ought to be wholly exempt from any such weakness: or the least that can be required to give the smallest shadow of excuse to this exclusive theory is, that the instant the pain was communicated by our foolish, indiscreet sympathy, we should think of nothing but getting rid of it as fast as possible, by fair means or foul, as a mechanical instinct. If the pain of sympathy, as soon as it arose, was decompounded from the objects which gave it birth, and acted upon the brain or nerves solely as a detached, desultory feeling, or abstracted sense of uneasiness, from which the mind shrunk with its natural aversion to pain, then I would allow that the impulse in this case, having no reference to the good of another, and seeking only to remove a present inconvenience from the individual, would still be properly self-love: but no such process of abstraction takes place. The feeling of compassion, as it first enters the mind, so it continues to act upon it in conjunction with the idea of what another suffers; refers every wish it forms or every effort it makes, to the removal of pain from a fellow-creature, and is only satisfied when it believes this end to be accomplished. It is not a blind, physical repugnance to pain, as affecting ourselves, but rational or intelligible conception of it as existing out of ourselves, that prompts and sustains our exertions in behalf of humanity. Nor

can it be otherwise, while man is the creature of imagination and reason, and has faculties that implicate him (whether he will or not) in the pleasures and pains of others, and bind up his fate with theirs. Why, then, when an action or feeling is neither in its commencement nor progress, nor ultimate objects, dictated by or subject to the control of self-love, bestow the name where every thing but the name is wanting?

*A.* I must give you fair warning, that in this last *tirade* you have more than once gone beyond my comprehension. Your distinctions are too fine-drawn, and there is a want of relief in the expression. Are you not getting back to what you describe as your *first manner*? Your present style is more amusing. See if you cannot throw a few high lights into that last argument!

*B. Un peu plus à l'Anglaise*—any thing to oblige! I say, then, it appears to me strange that self-love should be asserted by any impartial reasoner, (not the dupe of a play upon words), to be absolute and undisputed master of the human mind, when compassion or uneasiness on account of others enters it without leave and in spite of this principle. What! to be instantly expelled by it without mercy, so that it may still assert its pre-eminence? No; but to linger there, to hold consultation with another principle, Imagination, which owes no allegiance to self-interest, and to march out only under condition and guarantee that the welfare of another is first provided for without any special clause in its own favour. This is much as if you were to say and swear, that though the bailiff and his man have taken possession of your house, you are still the rightful owner of it.

*A.* And so I am.

*B.* Why, then, not turn out such unwelcome intruders without standing upon ceremony?

*A.* You were too vague and abstracted before: now you are growing too figurative. Always in extremes.

*B.* Give me leave for a moment, as you will not let me spin mere metaphysical cobwebs.

*A.* I am patient.

*B.* Suppose that by sudden transformation your body were so contrived that it could feel the actual sensations of another body, as if your nerves had an immediate and physical communication; that you were assailed by a number of objects you saw and knew nothing of before, and felt desires and appetites springing up in your bosom for which you could not at all account—would you not say that this addition of another body made a material alteration in your former situation; that it called for a new set of precautions and instincts to provide for its wants and wishes? or would you persist in it that you

were just where you were, that no change had taken place in your being and interests, and that your new body was in fact your old one, for no other reason than because it was yours? To my thinking, the case would be quite altered by the supererogation of such a new sympathetic body, and I should be for dividing my care and time pretty equally between them.

*Captain C.* You mean that in that case you would have taken in partners to the concern, as well as No. I.?

*B.* Yes; and my concern for No. II. would be something very distinct from, and quite independent of, my original and hitherto exclusive concern for No. I.

*A.* How very gross and vulgar! (whispering to D——,and then turning to me, added,)—but why suppose an impossibility? I hate all such incongruous and far-fetched illustrations.

*B.* And yet this very miracle takes place every day in the human mind and heart, and you and your sophists would persuade us that it is nothing, and would slur over its existence by a shallow misnomer. Do I not by imaginary sympathy acquire a new interest (out of myself) in others as much as I should on the former supposition by physical contact or animal magnetism? and am I not compelled by this new law of my nature (neither included in physical sensation nor a deliberate regard to my own individual welfare) to consult the feelings and wishes of the new social body of which I am become a member, often to the prejudice of my own? The parallel seems to me exact, and I think the inference from it unavoidable. I do not postpone a benevolent or friendly purpose to my own personal convenience, or make it bend to it—

> 'Letting *I should not* wait upon *I would*,
> Like the poor cat in the adage.'

The will is amenable not to our immediate sensibility but to reason and imagination, which point out and enforce a line of duty very different from that prescribed by self-love. The operation of sympathy or social feeling, though it has its seat certainly in the mind of the individual, is neither for his immediate behalf nor to his remote benefit, but is constantly a diversion from both, and therefore, I contend, is not in any sense selfish. The movements in my breast as much originate in, and are regulated by, the *idea* of what another feels, as if they were governed by a chord placed there vibrating to another's pain. If these movements were mechanical, they would be considered as directed to the good of another: it is odd, that because my bosom takes part and beats in unison with them, they should become of a less generous character. In the passions of hatred,

resentment, sullenness, or even in low spirits, we voluntarily go through a great deal of pain, because *such is our pleasure*; or strictly, because certain objects have taken hold of our imagination, and we cannot, or will not, get rid of the impression: why should good-nature and generosity be the only feelings in which we will not allow a little forgetfulness of ourselves? Once more. If self-love, or each individual's sensibility, sympathy, what you will, were like an animalcule, sensitive, quick, shrinking instantly from whatever gave it pain, seeking instinctively whatever gave it pleasure, and having no other obligation or law of its existence, then I should be most ready to acknowledge that this principle was in its nature, end, and origin, selfish, slippery, treacherous, inert, inoperative but as an instrument of some immediate stimulus, incapable of generous sacrifice or painful exertion, and deserving a name and title accordingly, leading one to bestow upon it its proper attributes. But the very reverse of all this happens. The mind is tenacious of remote purposes, indifferent to immediate feelings, which cannot consist with the nature of a rational and voluntary agent. Instead of the animalcule swimming in pleasure and gliding from pain, the principle of self-love is incessantly to the imagination or sense of duty what the fly is to the spider—that fixes its stings into it, involves it in its web, sucks its blood, and preys upon its vitals! Does the spider do all this to please the fly? Just as much as Regulus returned to Carthage and was rolled down a hill in a barrel with iron spikes in it to please himself! The imagination or understanding is no less the enemy of our pleasure than of our interest. It will not let us be at ease till we have accomplished certain objects with which we have ourselves no concern but as melancholy truths.

*A.* But the spider you have so quaintly conjured up is a different animal from the fly. The imagination on which you lay so much stress is a part of one's-self.

*B.* I grant it: and for that very reason, self-love, or a principle tending exclusively to our own immediate gratification or future advantage, neither is nor can be the sole spring of action in the human mind.

*A.* I cannot see that at all.

*D.* Nay, I think he has made it out better than usual.

*B.* Imagination is another name for an interest in things out of ourselves, which must naturally run counter to our own. Self-love, for so fine and smooth-spoken a gentleman, leads his friends into odd scrapes. The situation of Regulus in a barrel with iron-spikes in it was not a very easy one: but, say the advocates of refined self-love, their points were a succession of agreeable punctures in his sides,

compared with the stings of dishonour. But what bound him to this dreadful alternative? Not self-love. When the pursuit of honour becomes troublesome, 'throw honour to the dogs—I'll none of it!' This seems the true Epicurean solution. Philosophical self-love seems neither a voluptuary nor an effeminate coward, but a cynic, and even a martyr, so that I am afraid he will hardly dare show his face at Very's, and that, with this knowledge of his character, even the countenance of the Count de Stutt-Tracy will not procure his admission to the saloons.

*A.* The Count de Stutt-Tracy, did you say? Who is he? I never heard of him.

*B.* He is the author of the celebrated 'Idéologie,' which Bonaparte denounced to the Chamber of Peers as the cause of his disasters in Russia. He is equally hated by the Bourbons; and what is more extraordinary still, he is patronised by Ferdinand VII. who settled a pension of two hundred crowns a year on the translator of his works. He speaks of Condillac as having '*created* the science of Ideology,' and holds Helvetius for a true philosopher.

*A.* Which you do not! I think it a pity you should affect singularity of opinion in such matters, when you have all the most sensible and best-informed judges against you.

*B.* I am sorry for it too; but I am afraid I can hardly expect you with me, till I have all Europe on my side, of which I see no chance while the Englishman with his notions of solid beef and pudding holds fast by his substantial identity, and the Frenchman with his lighter food and air mistakes every shadowy impulse for himself.

## THE SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED.

*The New Monthly Magazine.*] [*December*, 1828.

*D.* You deny, I think, that personal identity, in the qualified way in which you think proper to admit it, is any ground for the doctrine of self-interest?

*B.* Yes, in an exclusive and absolute sense I do undoubtedly, that is, in the sense in which it is affirmed by metaphysicians, and ordinarily believed in.

*D.* Could you not go over the ground briefly, without entering into technicalities?

*B.* Not easily: but stop me when I entangle myself in difficulties. A person fancies, or feels habitually, that he has a positive, sub-

stantial interest in his own welfare, (generally speaking) just as much as he has in any actual sensation that he feels, because he is always and necessarily the same self. What is his interest at one time is therefore equally *his* interest at all other times. This is taken for granted as a self-evident proposition. Say he does not feel a particular benefit or injury at this present moment, yet it is he who is to feel it, which comes to the same thing. Where there is this continued identity of person, there must also be a correspondent identity of interest. I have an abstract, unavoidable interest in whatever can befall myself, which I can have or feel in no other person living, because I am always under every possible circumstance the self-same individual, and not any other individual whatsoever. In short, this word *self* (so closely do a number of associations cling round it and cement it together) is supposed to represent as it were a given concrete substance, as much one thing as any thing in nature can possibly be, and the centre or *substratum* in which the different impressions and ramifications of my being meet and are indissolubly knit together.

*A.* And you propose then seriously to take 'this one entire and perfect chrysolite,' this self, this 'precious jewel of the soul,' this rock on which mankind have built their faith for ages, and at one blow shatter it to pieces with the sledge-hammer, or displace it from its hold in the imagination with the wrenching-irons of metaphysics?

*B.* I am willing to use my best endeavours for that purpose.

*D.* You really ought: for you have the prejudices of the whole world against you.

*B.* I grant the prejudices are formidable; and I should despair, did I not think the reasons even stronger. Besides, without altering the opinions of the whole world, I might be contented with the suffrages of one or two intelligent people.

*D.* Nay, you will prevail by flattery, if not by argument.

*A.* That is something newer than all the rest.

*B.* 'Plain truth,' dear A——, 'needs no flowers of speech.'

*D.* Let me rightly understand you. Do you mean to say that I am not C. D. and that you are not W. B. or that we shall not both of us remain so to the end of the chapter, without a possibility of ever changing places with each other?

*B.* I am afraid, if you go to that, there is very little chance that

'*I* shall be ever mistaken for *you*.'

But with all this precise individuality and inviolable identity that you speak of, let me ask, Are you not a little changed (less so, it is true, than most people) from what you were twenty years ago? Or do

you expect to appear the same that you are now twenty years hence?

*D.* 'No more of that if thou lovest me.' We know what we are, but we know not what we shall be.

*B.* A truce then; but be assured that whenever you happen to fling up your part, there will be no other person found to attempt it after you.

*D.* Pray, favour us with your paradox without farther preface.

*B.* I will then try to match my paradox against your prejudice, which as it is armed all in proof, to make any impression on it, I must, I suppose, take aim at the rivets; and if I can hit them, if I do not (round and smooth as it is) cut it into three pieces, and show that two parts in three are substance and the third and principal part shadow, never believe me again. Your real self ends exactly where your pretended self-interest begins; and in calculating upon this principle as a solid, permanent, absolute, self-evident truth, you are mocked with a name.

*D.* How so? I hear, but do not see.

*B.* You must allow that this identical, indivisible, ostensible self is at any rate distinguishable into three parts,—the past, the present, and future?

*D.* I see no particular harm in that.

*B.* It is nearly all I ask. Well then, I admit that you have a peculiar, emphatic, incommunicable and exclusive interest or fellow-feeling in the two first of these selves; but I deny resolutely and unequivocally that you have any such natural, absolute, unavoidable, and mechanical interest in the last self, or in your future being, the interest you take in it being necessarily the offspring of understanding and imagination (aided by habit and circumstances), like that which you take in the welfare of others, and yet this last interest is the only one that is ever the object of rational and voluntary pursuit, or that ever comes into competition with the interests of others.

*D.* I am still to seek for the connecting clue.

*B.* I am almost ashamed to ask for your attention to a statement so very plain that it seems to border on a truism. I have an interest of a peculiar and limited nature in my present self, inasmuch as I feel my actual sensations not simply in a degree, but in a way and by means of faculties which afford me not the smallest intimation of the sensations of others. I cannot possibly feel the sensations of any one else, nor consequently take the slightest interest in them as such. I have no nerves communicating with another's brain, and transmitting to me either the glow of pleasure or the agony of pain which he may feel at the present moment by means of his senses. So far, therefore,

namely, so far as my present self or immediate sensations are concerned, I am cut off from all sympathy with others. I stand alone in the world, a perfectly insulated individual, necessarily and in the most unqualified sense indifferent to all that passes around me, and that does not in the first instance affect myself, for otherwise I neither have nor can have the remotest consciousness of it as a matter of organic sensation, any more than the mole has of light or the deaf adder of sounds.

*D.* Spoken like an oracle.

*B.* Again, I have a similar peculiar, mechanical, and untransferable interest in my past self, because I remember and can dwell upon my past sensations (even after the objects are removed) also in a way and by means of faculties which do not give me the smallest insight into or sympathy with the past feelings of others. I may conjecture and fancy what those feelings have been; and so I do. But I have no *memory* or continued consciousness of what either of good or evil may have found a place in their bosoms, no secret spring that touched vibrates to the hopes and wishes that are no more, unlocks the chambers of the past with the same assurance of reality, or identifies my feelings with theirs in the same intimate manner as with those which I have already felt in my own person. Here again, then, there is a real, undoubted, original and positive foundation for the notion of self to rest upon; for in relation to my former self and past feelings, I do possess a faculty which serves to unite me more especially to my own being, and at the same time draws a distinct and impassable line around that being, separating it from every other. A door of communication stands always open between my present consciousness and my past feelings, which is locked and barred by the hand of Nature and the constitution of the human understanding against the intrusion of any straggling impressions from the minds of others. I can only see into their real history darkly and by reflection. To sympathise with their joys or sorrows, and place myself in their situation either now or formerly, I must proceed by guess-work, and borrow the use of the common faculty of imagination. I am ready to acknowledge, then, that in what regards the past as well as the present, there is a strict metaphysical distinction between myself and others, and that my personal identity so far, or in the close, continued, inseparable connection between my past and present impressions, is firmly and irrevocably established.

*D.* You go on swimmingly. So far all is sufficiently clear.

*B.* But now comes the rub: for beyond that point I deny that the doctrine of personal identity or self-interest (as a consequence from it) has any foundation to rest upon but a confusion of names and

ideas. It has none in the nature of things or of the human mind. For I have no faculty by which I can project myself into the future, or hold the same sort of palpable, tangible, immediate, and exclusive communication with my future feelings, in the same manner as I am made to feel the present moment by means of the senses, or the past moment by means of memory. If I have any such faculty, expressly set apart for the purpose, name it. If I have no such faculty, I can have no such interest. In order that I may possess a proper personal identity so as to live, breathe, and feel along the whole line of my existence in the same intense and intimate mode, it is absolutely necessary to have some general medium or faculty by which my successive impressions are blended and amalgamated together, and to maintain and support this extraordinary interest. But so far from there being any foundation for this merging and incorporating of my future in my present self, there is no link of connection, no sympathy, no reaction, no mutual consciousness between them, nor even a possibility of any thing of the kind, in a mechanical and personal sense. Up to the present point, the spot on which we stand, the doctrine of personal identity holds good; hitherto the proud and exclusive pretensions of self 'come, but no farther.' The rest is air, is nothing, is a name, or but the common ground of reason and humanity. If I wish to pass beyond this point and look into my own future lot, or anticipate my future weal or woe before it has had an existence, I can do so by means of the same faculties by which I enter into and identify myself with the welfare, the being, and interests of others, but only by these. As I have already said, I have no particular organ or faculty of self-interest, in that case made and provided. I have no sensation of what is to happen to myself in future, no presentiment of it, no instinctive sympathy with it, nor consequently any abstract and unavoidable self-interest in it. Now mark. It is only in regard to my past and present being, that a broad and insurmountable barrier is placed between myself and others: as to future objects, there is no absolute and fundamental distinction whatever. But it is only these last that are the objects of any rational or practical interest. The idea of self properly attaches to objects of sense or memory, but these can never be the objects of action or of voluntary pursuit, which must, by the supposition, have an eye to future events. But with respect to these the chain of self-interest is dissolved and falls in pieces by the very necessity of our nature, and our obligations to self as a blind, mechanical, unsociable principle are lost in the general law which binds us to the pursuit of good as it comes within our reach and knowledge.

*A.* A most lame and impotent conclusion, I must say. Do you

mean to affirm that you have really the same interest in another's welfare that you have in your own?

*B.* I do not wish to assert any thing without proof. Will you tell me if you have this particular interest in yourself what faculty is it that gives it you—to what conjuration and what mighty magic it is owing—or whether it is merely the name of self that is to be considered as a proof of all the absurdities and impossibilities that can be drawn from it?

*A.* I do not see that you have hitherto pointed out any.

*B.* What! not the impossibility that you should be another being, with whom you have not a particle of fellow-feeling?

*A.* Another being! Yes, I know it is always impossible for me to be another being.

*B.* Ay, or yourself either, without such a fellow-feeling, for it is that which constitutes self. If not, explain to me what you mean by self. But it is more convenient for you to let that magical sound lie involved in the obscurity of prejudice and language. You will please to take notice that it is not I who commence these hairbreadth distinctions and special-pleading. I take the old ground of common sense and natural feeling, and maintain that though in a popular, practical sense mankind are strongly swayed by self-interest, yet in the same ordinary sense they are also governed by motives of good-nature, compassion, friendship, virtue, honour, &c. Now all this is denied by your modern metaphysicians, who would reduce every thing to abstract self-interest, and exclude every other mixed motive or social tie in a strict, philosophical sense. They would drive me from my ground by scholastic subtleties and newfangled phrases; am I to blame then if I take them at their word, and try to foil them at their own weapons? Either stick to the unpretending *jog-trot* notions on the subject, or if you are determined to refine in analysing words and arguments, do not be angry if I follow the example set me, or even go a little farther to arrive at the truth. Shall we proceed on this understanding?

*A.* As you please.

*B.* We have got so far then (if I mistake not, and if there is not some flaw in the argument which I am unable to detect) that the past and present (which alone can appeal to our selfish faculties) are not the objects of action, and that the future (which can alone be the object of practical pursuit) has no particular claim or hold upon self. All action, all passion, all morality and self-interest, is prospective.

*A.* You have not made that point quite clear. What then is meant by a present interest, by the gratification of the present moment, as opposed to a future one?

*B.* Nothing, in a strict sense; or rather in common speech, you mean a near one, the interest of the next moment, the next hour, the next day, the next year, as it happens.

*A.* What! would you have me believe that I snatch my hand out of the flame of a candle from a calculation of future consequences?

*D. (laughing.)* A. had better not meddle with that question. B. is in his element there. It is his old and favourite illustration.

*B.* Do you not snatch your hand out of the fire to procure ease from pain?

*A.* No doubt, I do.

*B.* And is not this case subsequent to the act, and the act itself to the feeling of pain, which caused it?

*A.* It may be so; but the interval is so slight that we are not sensible of it.

*B.* Nature is nicer in her distinctions than we. Thus you could not lift the food to your mouth, but upon the same principle. The viands are indeed tempting, but if it were the sight or smell of these alone that attracted you, you would remain satisfied with them. But you use means to ends, neither of which exist till you employ or produce them, and which would never exist if the understanding which foresees them did not run on before the actual objects and purvey to appetite. If you say it is habit, it is partly so; but that habit would never have been formed, were it not for the connection between cause and effect, which always takes place in the order of time, or of what Hume calls *antecedents* and *consequents*.

*A.* I confess I think this a mighty microscopic way of looking at the subject.

*B.* Yet you object equally to more vague and sweeping generalities. Let me, however, endeavour to draw the knot a little tighter, as it has a considerable weight to bear—no less, in my opinion, than the whole world of moral sentiments. All voluntary action must relate to the future: but the future can only exist or influence the mind as an object of imagination and forethought; therefore the motive to voluntary action, to all that we seek or shun, must be in all cases *ideal* and problematical. The thing itself which is an object of pursuit can never co-exist with the motives which make it an object of pursuit. No one will say that the past can be an object either of prevention or pursuit. It may be a subject of involuntary regrets, or may give rise to the starts and flaws of passion; but we cannot set about seriously recalling or altering it. Neither can that which at present exists, or is an object of sensation, be at the same time an object of action or of volition, since if it *is*, no volition or exertion of mine can for the instant make it to be other than it is. I can make

it *cease* to be indeed, but this relates to the future, to the supposed non-existence of the object, and not to its actual impression on me. For a thing to be *willed*, it must necessarily not be. Over my past and present impressions my will has no control: they are placed, according to the poet, beyond the reach of fate, much more of human means. In order that I may take an effectual and consistent interest in any thing, that it may be an object of hope or fear, of desire or dread, it must be a thing still to come, a thing still in doubt, depending on circumstances and the means used to bring about or avert it. It is my will that determines its existence or the contrary (otherwise there would be no use in troubling oneself about it); it does not itself lay its peremptory, inexorable mandates on my will. For it is as yet (and must be in order to be the rational object of a moment's deliberation) a non-entity, a possibility merely and it is plain that nothing can be the cause of nothing. That which is not, cannot act, much less can it act mechanically, physically, all-powerfully. So far is it from being true that a real and practical interest in any thing are convertible terms, that a practical interest can never by any possible chance be a real one, that is, excited by the presence of a real object or by mechanical sympathy. I cannot assuredly be induced by a present object to take means to make it exist—it can be no more than present to me—or if it is past, it is too late to think of recovering the occasion or preventing it now. But the future, the future is all our own; or rather it belongs equally to others. The world of action then, of business or pleasure, of self-love or benevolence, is not made up of solid materials, moved by downright, solid springs; it is essentially a void, an unreal mockery, both in regard to ourselves and others, except as it is filled up, animated, and set in motion by human thoughts aud purposes. The ingredients of passion, action, and properly of interest are never positive, palpable matters-of-fact, concrete existences, but symbolical representations of events lodged in the bosom of futurity, and teaching us, by timely anticipation and watchful zeal, to build up the fabric of our own or others' future weal.

*A.* Do we not sometimes plot their woe with at least equal good-will?

*B.* Not much oftener than we are accessory to our own.

*A.* I must say that savours more to me of an antithesis than of an answer.

*B.* For once, be it so.

*A.* But surely there is a difference between a real and an imaginary interest? A history is not a romance.

*B.* Yes; but in this sense the feelings and interests of others are

in the end as real, as much matters of fact as mine or yours can be. The history of the world is not a romance, though you and I have had only a small share in it. You would turn every thing into auto-biography. The interests of others are no more chimerical, visionary, fantastic than my own, being founded in truth, and both are brought home to my bosom in the same way by the force of imagination and sympathy.

*D.* But in addition to all this sympathy that you make such a rout about, it is *I* who am to feel a real, downright interest in my own future good, and I shall feel no such interest in another person's. Does not this make a wide, nay a total difference in the case? Am I to have no more affection for my own flesh and blood than for another's?

*B.* This would indeed make an entire difference in the case, if your interest in your own good were founded in your affection for yourself, and not your affection for yourself in your attachment to your own good. If you were attached to your own good merely because it was *yours*, I do not see why you should not be equally attached to your own ill—both are equally yours! Your own person or that of others would, I take it, be alike indifferent to you, but for the degree of sympathy you have with the feelings of either. Take away the sense or apprehension of pleasure and pain, and you would care no more about yourself than you do about the hair of your head or the paring of your nails, the parting with which gives you no sensible uneasiness at the time or on after-reflection.

*D.* But up to the present moment you allow that I have a particular interest in my proper self. Where then am I to stop, or how draw the line between my real and my imaginary identity?

*B.* The line is drawn for you by the nature of things. Or if the difference between reality and imagination is so small that you cannot perceive it, it only shows the strength of the latter. Certain it is that we can no more anticipate our future being than we change places with another individual, except in an *ideal* and figurative sense. But it is just as impossible that I should have an actual sensation of and interest in my future feelings as that I should have an actual sensation of and interest in what another feels at the present instant. An essential and irreconcileable difference in our primary faculties forbids it. The future, were it the next moment, were it an object nearest and dearest to our hearts, is a dull blank, opaque, impervious to sense as an object close to the eye of the blind, did not the ray of reason and reflection enlighten it. We can never say to its fleeting, painted essence, 'Come, let me clutch thee!' it is a thing of air, a phantom that flies before us, and we follow it, and with respect to all but our past and present sensations, which are no longer any thing to

action, we totter on the brink of nothing. That self which we project before us into it, that we make our proxy or representative, and empower to embody, and transmit back to us all our real, substantial interests before they have had an existence, except in our imaginations, is but a shadow of ourselves, a bundle of habits, passions, and prejudices, a body that falls in pieces at the touch of reason or the approach of inquiry. It is true, we do build up such an imaginary self, and a proportionable interest in it; we clothe it with the associations of the past and present, we disguise it in the drapery of language, we add to it the strength of passion and the warmth of affection, till we at length come to class our whole existence under one head, and fancy our future history a solid, permanent, and actual continuation of our immediate being, but all this only proves the force of imagination and habit to build up such a structure on a merely partial foundation, and does not alter the true nature and distinction of things. On the same foundation are built up nearly as high natural affection, friendship, the love of country, of religion, &c. But of this presently. What shows that the doctrine of self-interest, however high it may rear its head, or however impregnable it may seem to attack, is a mere 'contradiction,'

'In terms a fallacy, in fact a fiction,'

is this single consideration, that we never know what is to happen to us before-hand, no, not even for a moment, and that we cannot so much as tell whether we shall be alive a year, a month, or a day hence. We have no presentiment of what awaits us, making us feel the future in the instant. Indeed such an insight into futurity would be inconsistent with itself, or we must become mere passive instruments in the hands of fate. A house may fall on my head as I go from this, I may be crushed to pieces by a carriage running over me, or I may receive a piece of news that is death to my hopes before another four-and-twenty hours are passed over, and yet I feel nothing of the blow that is thus to stagger and stun me. I laugh and am well. I have no warning given me either of the course or the consequence (in truth if I had, I should, if posssible, avoid it). This continued self-interest that watches over all my concerns alike, past, present, and future, and concentrates them all in one powerful and invariable principle of action, is useless here, leaves me at a loss at my greatest need, is torpid, silent, dead, and I have no more consciousness of what so nearly affects me, and no more care about it, (till I find out my danger by other and natural means,) than if no such thing were ever to happen, or were to happen to the Man in the Moon.

'And coming events cast their shadows before.'

This beautiful line is not verified in the ordinary prose of life. That it is not, is a staggering consideration for your fine, practical, instinctive, abstracted, comprehensive, uniform principle of self-interest. Don't you think so, D——?

*D.* I shall not answer you. Am I to give up my existence for an idle sophism? You heap riddle upon riddle; but I am mystery-proof. I still feel my personal identity as I do the chair I sit on, though I am enveloped in a cloud of smoke and words. Let me have your answer to a plain question.—Suppose I were actually to see a coach coming along and I was in danger of being run over, what I want to know is, should I not try to save myself sooner than any other person?

*B.* No, you would first try to save a sister, if she were with you.

*A.* Surely that would be a very rare instance of self, though I do not deny it.

*B.* I do not think so. I believe there is hardly any one who does not prefer some one to themselves. For example, let us look into Waverley.

*A.* Ay, that is the way that you take your ideas of philosophy, from novels and romances, as if they were sound evidence.

*B.* If my conclusions are as true to nature as my premises, I shall be satisfied. Here is the passage I was going to quote: 'I was only ganging to say, my lord,' said Evan, in what he meant to be an insinuating manner, 'that if your excellent honour and the honourable court would let Vich Ian Vohr go free just this once and let him gae back to France and not trouble King George's government again, that any six o' the very best of his clan will be willing to be justified in his stead; and if you 'll just let me gae down to Glennaquoich, I 'll fetch them up to ye myself to head or hang, and you may begin with me the very first man.'[1]

*A.* But such instances as this are the effect of habit and strong prejudice. We can hardly argue from so barbarous a state of society.

*B.* Excuse me there. I contend that our preference of ourselves is just as much the effect of habit, and very frequently a more unaccountable and unreasonable one than any other.

*A.* I should like to hear how you can possibly make that out.

*B.* If you will not condemn me before you hear what I have to say, I will try. You allow that D——, in the case we have been talking of, would perhaps run a little risk for you or me; but if it were a perfect stranger, he would get out of the way as fast as his legs would carry him, and leave the stranger to shift for himself.

*A.* Yes; and does not that overturn your whole theory?

[1] *Waverley*, vol. iii. p. 201.

*B.* It would if my theory were as devoid of common sense as you are pleased to suppose; that is, if because I deny an original and absolute distinction in nature (where there is no such thing,) it followed that I must deny that circumstances, intimacy, habit, knowledge, or a variety of incidental causes could have any influence on our affections and actions. My inference is just the contrary. For would you not say that D—— cared little about the stranger for this plain reason, that he knew nothing about him?

*A.* No doubt.

*B.* And he would care rather more about you and me, because he knows more about us?

*A.* Why yes, it would seem so.

*B.* And he would care still more about a sister, (according to the same supposition) because he would be still better acquainted with her, and had been more constantly with her?

*A.* I will not deny it.

*B.* And it is on the same principle (generally speaking) that a man cares most of all about himself, because he knows more about himself than about any body else, that he is more in the secret of his own most intimate thoughts and feelings, and more in the habit of providing for his own wants and wishes, which he can anticipate with greater liveliness and certainty than those of others, from being more nearly 'made and moulded of things past.' The poetical fiction is rendered easier and assisted by my acquaintance with myself, just as it is by the ties of kindred or habits of friendly intercourse. There is no farther approach made to the doctrines of self-love and personal identity.

*D.* E., here is B. trying to persuade me I am not myself.

*E.* Sometimes you are not.

*D.* But he says that I never am.—Or is it only that I am not to be so?

*B.* Nay, I hope 'thou art to continue, thou naughty varlet'—

'Here and hereafter, if the last may be!'

You have been yourself (nobody like you) for the last forty years of your life: you would not prematurely stuff the next twenty into the account, till you have had them fairly out?

*D.* Not for the world, I have too great an affection for them.

*B.* Yet I think you would have less if you did not look forward to pass them among old books, old friends, old haunts. If you were cut off from all these, you would be less anxious about what was left of yourself.

*D.* I would rather be the *Wandering Jew* than not be at all.

*B.* Or you would not be the person I always took you for.

*D.* Does not this willingness to be the Wandering Jew rather than nobody, seem to indicate that there is an abstract attachment to self, to the bare idea of existence, independently of circumstances or habit?

*B.* It must be a very loose and straggling one. You mix up some of your old recollections and favourite notions with your self elect, and indulge them in your new character, or you would trouble yourself very little about it. If you do not come in in some shape or other, it is merely saying that you would be sorry if the Wandering Jew were to disappear from the earth, however strictly he may have hitherto maintained his *incognito*.

*D.* There is something in that; and as well as I remember there is a curious but exceedingly mystical illustration of this point in an original Essay of yours which I have read and spoken to you about.

*B.* I believe there is; but A—— is tired of making objections, and I of answering them to no purpose.

*D.* I have the book in the closet, and if you like, we will turn to the place. It is after that burst of enthusiastic recollection (the only one in the book) that Southey said at the time was something between the manner of Milton's prose-works and Jeremy Taylor.

*B.* Ah! I as little thought then that I should ever be set down as a florid prose-writer as that he would become poet-laureat!

*J. D.* here took the volume from his brother, and read the following passage from it.

'I do not think I should illustrate the foregoing reasoning so well by any thing I could add on the subject, as by relating the manner in which it first struck me. There are moments in the life of a solitary thinker which are to him what the evening of some great victory is to the conqueror and hero—milder triumphs long remembered with truer and deeper delight. And though the shouts of multitudes do not hail his success—though gay trophies, though the sounds of music, the glittering of armour, and the neighing of steeds do not mingle with his joy, yet shall he not want monuments and witnesses of his glory—the deep forest, the willowy brook, the gathering clouds of winter, or the silent gloom of his own chamber, "faithful remembrancers of his high endeavour, and his glad success," that, as time passes by him with unreturning wing, still awaken the consciousness of a spirit patient, indefatigable in the search of truth, and the hope of surviving in the thoughts and minds of other men. I remember I had been reading a speech which Mirabaud (the author of the "System of Nature") has put into the mouth of a supposed Atheist at the last judgment; and was afterwards led on, by some means or other to consider the question, whether it could properly be

said to be an act of virtue in any one to sacrifice his own final happiness to that of any other person or number of persons, if it were possible for the one ever to be made the price of the other? Suppose it were my own case—that it were in my power to save twenty other persons by voluntarily consenting to suffer for them: Why should I not do a generous thing, and never trouble myself about what might be the consequence to myself the Lord knows when?

'The reason why a man should prefer his own future welfare to that of others is, that he has a necessary, absolute interest in the one, which he cannot have in the other—and this, again, is a consequence of his being always the same individual, of his continued identity with himself. The difference, I thought, was this, that however insensible I may be to my own interest at any future period, yet when the time comes I shall feel differently about it. I shall then judge of it from the actual impression of the object, that is, truly and certainly; and as I shall still be conscious of my past feelings, and shall bitterly regret my own folly and insensibility, I ought, as a rational agent, to be determined now by what I shall then wish I had done, when I shall feel the consequences of my actions most deeply and sensibly. It is this continued consciousness of my own feelings which gives me an immediate interest in whatever relates to my future welfare, and makes me at all times accountable to myself for my own conduct. As, therefore, this consciousness will be renewed in me after death, if I exist again at all—But stop—as I must be conscious of my past feelings to be myself, and as this conscious being will be myself, how if that consciousness should be transferred to some other being? How am I to know that I am not imposed upon by a false claim of identity? But that is ridiculous, because you will have no other self than that which arises from this very consciousness. Why, then, this self may be multiplied in as many different beings as the Deity may think proper to endue with the same consciousness; which, if it can be renewed at will in any one instance, may clearly be so in a hundred others. Am I to regard all these as equally myself? Am I equally interested in the fate of all? Or if I must fix upon some one of them in particular as my representative and other self, how am I to be determined in my choice? Here, then, I saw an end put to my speculations about absolute self-interest and personal identity. I saw plainly that the consciousness of my own feelings, which is made the foundation of my continued interest in them, could not extend to what had never been, and might never be; that my identity with myself must be confined to the connection between my past and present being; that with respect to my future feelings or interests,

they could have no communication with, or influence over, my present feelings and interests, merely because they were future; that I shall be hereafter affected by the recollection of my past feelings and actions; and my remorse be equally heightened by reflecting on my past folly and late-earned wisdom, whether I am really the same being, or have only the same consciousness renewed in me; but that to suppose that this remorse can re-act in the reverse order on my present feelings, or give me an immediate interest in my future feelings, before they exist, is an express contradiction in terms. It can only affect me as an imaginary idea, or an idea of truth. But so may the interests of others; and the question proposed was, whether I have not some real, necessary, absolute interest in whatever relates to my future being, in consequence of my immediate connection with myself—independently of the general impression which all positive ideas have on my mind. How, then, can this pretended unity of consciousness which is only reflected from the past—which makes me so little acquainted with the future that I cannot even tell for a moment how long it will be continued, whether it will be entirely interrupted by or renewed in me after death, and which might be multiplied in I don't know how many different beings, and prolonged by complicated sufferings, without my being any the wiser for it,—how, I say, can a principle of this sort identify my present with my future interests, and make me as much a participator in what does not at all affect me as if it were actually impressed on my senses? It is plain, as this conscious being may be decompounded, entirely destroyed, renewed again, or multiplied in a great number of beings, and as, whichever of these takes place, it cannot produce the least alteration in my present being—that what I am does not depend on what I am to be, and that there is no communication between my future interests, and the motives by which my present conduct must be governed. This can no more be influenced by what may be my future feelings with respect to it, than it will then be possible for me to alter my past conduct by wishing that I had acted differently. I cannot, therefore, have a principle of active self-interest arising out of the immediate connection between my present and future self, for no such connection exists, or is possible. I am what I am in spite of the future. My feelings, actions, and interests, must be determined by causes already existing and acting, and are absolutely independent of the future. Where there is not an intercommunity of feelings, there can be no identity of interests. My personal interest in any thing must refer either to the interest excited by the actual impression of the object, which cannot be felt before it exists, and can last no longer than while the impression lasts; or it may refer to the parti-

cular manner in which I am mechanically affected by the idea of my own impressions in the absence of the object. I can, therefore, have no proper personal interest in my future impressions, since neither my ideas of future objects, nor my feelings with respect to them, can be excited either directly or indirectly by the impressions themselves, or by any ideas or feelings accompanying them, without a complete transposition of the order in which causes and effects follow one another in nature. The only reason for my preferring my future interest to that of others, must arise from my anticipating it with greater warmth of present imagination. It is this greater liveliness and force with which I can enter into my future feelings, that in a manner identifies them with my present being; and this notion of identity being once formed, the mind makes use of it to strengthen its habitual propensity, by giving to personal motives a reality and absolute truth which they can never have. Hence it has been inferred that my real, substantial interest in any thing, must be derived in some indirect manner from the impression of the object itself, as if that could have any sort of communication with my present feelings, or excite any interest in my mind but by means of the imagination, which is naturally affected in a certain manner by the prospect of future good or evil.'

*J. D.* 'This is the strangest tale that e'er I heard,

*C. D.* 'It is the strangest fellow, brother John!'

## THE FREE ADMISSION

*The New Monthly Magazine.*] [*July*, 1830.

A FREE Admission is the *lotos* of the mind: the leaf in which your name is inscribed as having the privileges of the *entrée* for the season is of an oblivious quality—an antidote for half the ills of life. I speak here not of a purchased but of a gift-ticket, an emanation of the generosity of the Managers, a token of conscious desert. With the first you can hardly bring yourself to go to the theatre; with the last, you cannot keep away. If you have paid five guineas for a free-admission for the season, this *free-admission* turns to a mere slavery. You seem to have done a foolish thing, and to have committed an extravagance under the plea of economy. You are struck with remorse. You are impressed with a conviction that pleasure is not to be bought. You have paid for your privilege in the lump, and you receive the benefit in driblets. The five pounds you are out of pocket does not meet with an adequate compensation the first night, or on any single occasion—you must come again, and use double diligence

to strike a balance to make up your large arrears; instead of an obvious saving, it hangs as a dead-weight on your satisfaction all the year; and the improvident price you have paid for them kills every ephemeral enjoyment, and poisons the flattering illusions of the scene. You have incurred a debt, and must go every night to redeem it; and as you do not like being tied to the oar, or making a toil of a pleasure, you stay away altogether; give up the promised luxury as a bad speculation; sit sullenly at home, or bend your loitering feet in any other direction; and putting up with the first loss, resolve never to be guilty of the like folly again. But it is not thus with the possessor of a Free Admission, truly so called. His is a pure pleasure, a clear gain. He feels none of these irksome qualms and misgivings. He marches to the theatre like a favoured lover; if he is compelled to absent himself, he feels all the impatience and compunction of a prisoner. The portal of the Temple of the Muses stands wide open to him, closing the vista of the day—when he turns his back upon it at night with steps gradual and slow, mingled with the common crowd, but conscious of a virtue which they have not, he says, 'I shall come again to-morrow!' In passing through the streets, he casts a side-long, careless glance at the playbills: he reads the papers chiefly with a view to see what is the play for the following day, or the ensuing week. If it is something new, he is glad; if it is old, he is resigned —but he goes in either case. His steps bend mechanically that way —pleasure becomes a habit, and habit a duty—he fulfils his destiny— he walks deliberately along Long-acre (you may tell a man going to the play, and whether he pays or has a free admission)—quickens his pace as he turns the corner of Bow-street, and arrives breathless and in haste at the welcome spot, where on presenting himself, he receives a passport that is a release from care, thought, toil, for the evening, and wafts him into the regions of the blest! What is it to him how the world turns round if the play goes on; whether empires rise or fall, so that Covent-Garden stands its ground? Shall he plunge into the void of politics, that volcano burnt-out with the cold, sterile, sightless lava, hardening all around? or con over the registers of births, deaths, and marriages, when he may be present at Juliet's wedding, and gaze on Juliet's tomb? or shall he wonder at the throng of coaches in Regent-street, when he can feast his eyes with the coach (the fairy-vision of his childhood) in which Cinderella rides to the ball? Here (by the help of that *Open Sessame!* a Free Admission), ensconced in his favourite niche, looking from the 'loop-holes of retreat' in the second circle, he views the pageant of the world played before him; melts down years to moments; sees human life, like a gaudy shadow, glance across the stage; and here tastes of all earth's bliss, the sweet

without the bitter, the honey without the sting, and plucks ambrosial fruits and amaranthine flowers (placed by the enchantress Fancy within his reach,) without having to pay a tax for it at the time, or repenting of it afterwards. 'He is all ear and eye, and drinks in sounds or sights that might create a soul under the ribs of death.' 'The fly,' says Gay, 'that sips treacle, is lost in the sweets': so he that has a free-admission forgets every thing else. Why not? It is the chief and enviable transfer of his being from the real to the unreal world, and the changing half his life into a dream. 'Oh! leave me to my repose,' in my beloved corner at Covent Garden Theatre! This (and not 'the arm-chair at an inn,' though that too, at other times, and under different circumstances, is not without its charms,) is to me 'the throne of felicity.' If I have business that would detain me from this, I put it off till the morrow; if I have friends that call in just at the moment, let them go away under pain of bearing my maledictions with them. What is there in their conversation to atone to me for the loss of one quarter of an hour at the 'witching time of night?' If it is on indifferent subjects, it is flat and insipid; if it grows animated and interesting, it requires a painful effort, and begets a feverish excitement. But let me once reach, and fairly establish myself in this favourite seat, and I can bid a gay defiance to mischance, and leave debts and duns, friends and foes, objections and arguments, far behind me. I would, if I could, have it surrounded with a balustrade of gold, for it has been to me a palace of delight. There golden thoughts unbidden betide me, and golden visions come to me. There the dance, the laugh, the song, the scenic deception greet me; there are wafted Shakspear's winged words, or Otway's plaintive lines; and there how often have I heard young Kemble's voice, trembling at its own beauty, and prolonging its liquid tones, like the murmur of the billowy surge on sounding shores! There I no longer torture a sentence or strain a paradox: the mind is full without an effort, pleased without asking why. It inhales an atmosphere of joy, and is steeped in all the luxury of woe. To show how much sympathy has to do with the effect, let us suppose any one to have a free admission to the rehearsals of a morning, what mortal would make use of it? One might as well be at the bottom of a well, or at the top of St. Paul's for any pleasure we should derive from the finest tragedy or comedy. No, a play is nothing without an audience, it is a satisfaction too great and too general not to be shared with others. But reverse this cold and comfortless picture—let the eager crowd beset the theatre-doors 'like bees in spring-time, when the sun with Taurus rides'—let the boxes be filled with innocence and beauty like beds of lilies on the first night of Isabella

or Belvidera, see the flutter, the uneasy delight of expectation, see the big tear roll down the cheek of sensibility as the story proceeds—let us listen to the deep thunder of the pit, or catch the gallery's shout at some true master-stroke of passion; and we feel that a thousand hearts are beating in our bosoms, and hail the sparkling illusion reflected in a thousand eyes. The stage has, therefore, been justly styled 'a discipline of humanity'; for there is no place where the social principle is called forth with such strength and harmony, by a powerful interest in a common object. A crowd is everywhere else oppressive; but the fuller the play-house, the more intimately and cordially do we sympathise with every individual in it. Empty benches have as bad an effect on the spectator as on the players. This is one reason why so many mistakes are made with respect to plays and players, ere they come before the public. The taste is crude and uninformed till it is ripened by the blaze of lighted lamps and the sunshine of happy faces: the cold, critical faculty, the judgment of Managers and Committees asks the glow of sympathy and the buzz of approbation to prompt and guide it. We judge in a crowd with the sense and feelings of others; and from the very strength of the impression, fancy we should have come to the same unavoidable conclusion had we been left entirely to ourselves. Let any one try the experiment by reading a manuscript play, or seeing it acted—or by hearing a candidate for the stage rehearse behind the scenes, or *top* his part after the orchestra have performed their fatal prelude. Nor is the air of a play-house favourable only to social feeling—it aids the indulgence of solitary musing. The brimming cup of joy or sorrow is full; but it runs over to other thoughts and subjects. We can there (nowhere better) 'retire, the world shut out, our thoughts call home.' We hear the revelry and the shout, but 'the still, small voice' of other years and cherished recollections is not wanting. It is pleasant to hear Miss Ford repeat *Love's Catechism*, or Mrs. Humby[1] sing 'I cannot marry Crout': but the ear is not therefore deaf to Mrs. Jordan's laugh in Nell; Mrs. Goodall's Rosalind still haunts the glades of Arden, and the echo of Amiens' song, 'Blow, blow, thou winter's wind,' lingers through a lapse of thirty years. A pantomime (the Little Red Riding-Hood) recalls the innocence of our childish thoughts: a dance (the Minuet de la Cour) throws us back to the gorgeous days of Louis XIV. and tells us that the age of chivalry is gone for ever. Who will be the Mrs. Siddons of a distant age? What future Kean shall 'strut and fret his hour upon the stage,' full of genius and free from errors? What favourite actor or actress will be taking their farewell benefit a hundred years hence?

[1] This lady is not, it is true, at Covent Garden: I wish she were!

What plays and what players will then amuse the town? Oh, many-coloured scenes of human life! where are ye more truly represented than in the mirror of the stage? or where is that eternal principle of vicissitude which rules over ye, the painted pageant and the sudden gloom, more strikingly exemplified than here? At the entrance to our great theatres, in large capitals over the front of the stage, might be written MUTABILITY! Does not the curtain that falls each night on the pomps and vanities it was withdrawn awhile to reveal (and the next moment all is dark) afford a fine moral lesson? Here, in small room, is crowded the map of human life; the lengthened, varied scroll is unfolded like rich tapestry with its quaint and flaunting devices spread out; whatever can be saved from the giddy whirl of ever-rolling time and of this round orb, which moves on and never stops,[1] all that can strike the sense, can touch the heart, can stir up laughter or call tears from their secret source, is here treasured up and displayed ostentatiously—here is Fancy's motley wardrobe, the masks of all the characters that were ever played—here is a glass set up clear and large enough to show us our own features and those of all mankind—here, in this enchanted mirror, are represented, not darkly, but in vivid hues and bold relief, the struggle of Life and Death, the momentary pause between the cradle and the grave, with charming hopes and fears, terror and pity in a thousand modes, strange and ghastly apparitions, the events of history, the fictions of poetry (warm from the heart); all these, and more than can be numbered in my feeble page, fill that airy space where the green curtain rises, and haunt it with evanescent shapes and indescribable yearnings.

> 'See o'er the stage the ghost of Hamlet stalks,
> Othello rages, Desdemona mourns,
> And poor Monimia pours her soul in love.'

Who can collect into one audible pulsation the thoughts and feelings that in the course of his life all these together have occasioned; or what heart, if it could recall them at once, and in their undiminished power and plenitude, would not burst with the load? Let not the style be deemed exaggerated, but tame and creeping, that attempts to do justice to this high and pregnant theme, and let tears blot out the unequal lines that the pen traces! Quaffing these delights, inhaling this atmosphere, brooding over these visions, this long trail of glory, is the possessor of a Free Admission to be blamed if 'he takes his ease' at the play; and turning theatrical recluse, and forgetful of himself and his friends, devotes himself to the study of the drama, and to dreams of the past? By constant habit (having nothing to do,

[1] 'Mais vois la rapidité de cet astre qui vole et ne s'arrête jamais.'—*New Eloise.*

little else to think of), he becomes a tippler of the dews of Castaly—a dram-drinker on Mount Parnassus. He tastes the present moment, while a rich sea of pleasure presses to his lip and engulfs him round. The noise, the glare, the warmth, the company, produce a sort of listless intoxication, and clothe the pathos and the wit with a bodily sense. There is a weight, a closeness even, in the air, that makes it difficult to breathe out of it. The custom of going to the play night after night becomes a relief, a craving, a necessity—one cannot do without it. To sit alone is intolerable, to be in company is worse; we are attracted with pleasing force to the spot where 'all that mighty heart is beating still.' It is not that perhaps there is any thing new or fine to see—if there is, we attend to it—but at any time, it kills time and saves the trouble of thinking. O, Covent Garden! 'thy *freedom* hath made me effeminate!' It has hardly left me power to write this description of it. I am become its slave, I have no other sense or interest left. There I sit and lose the hours I live beneath the sky, without the power to stir, without any determination to stay. 'Teddy the Tiler' is become familiar to me, and, as it were, a part of my existence: 'Robert the Devil' has cast his spell over me. I have seen both thirty times at least, (no offence to the Management!) and could sit them out thirty times more. I am bed-rid in the lap of luxury; am grown callous and inert with perpetual excitement.

——'What avails from iron chains
Exempt, if rosy fetters bind as fast?'

I have my favourite box too, as Beau Brummell had his favourite leg; one must decide on something, not to be always deciding. Perhaps I may have my reasons too—perhaps into the box next to mine a Grace enters; perhaps from thence an air divine breathes a glance (of heaven's own brightness), kindles contagious fire;—but let us turn all such thoughts into the lobbies. These may be considered as an Arabesque border round the inclosed tablet of human life. If the Muses reign within, Venus sports heedless, but not unheeded without. Here a bevy of fair damsels, richly clad, knit with the Graces and the Hours in dance, lead on 'the frozen winter and the pleasant spring!' Would I were allowed to attempt a list of some of them, and Cowley's *Gallery* would blush at mine! But this is a licence which only poetry, and not even a Free Admission can give. I can now understand the attachment to a player's life, and how impossible it is for those who are once engaged in it ever to wean themselves from it. If the merely witnessing the bustle and the splendour of the scene as an idle spectator creates such a fascination, and flings such a charm over it, how much more must this be the case

with those who have given all their time and attention to it—who regard it as the sole means of distinction—with whom even the monotony and mortifications must please—and who, instead of being passive, casual votaries, are the dispensers of the bounty of the gods, and the high-priests at the altar?

## THE SICK CHAMBER

*The New Monthly Magazine.*] [*August*, 1830.

What a difference between this subject and my last—a 'Free Admission!' Yet from the crowded theatre to the sick chamber, from the noise, the glare, the keen delight, to the loneliness, the darkness, the dulness, and the pain, there is but one step. A breath of air, an overhanging cloud effects it; and though the transition is made in an instant, it seems as if it would last for ever. A sudden illness not only puts a stop to the career of our triumphs and agreeable sensations, but blots out and cancels all recollection of and desire for them. We lose the relish of enjoyment; we are effectually cured of our romance. Our bodies are confined to our beds; nor can our thoughts wantonly detach themselves and take the road to pleasure, but turn back with doubt and loathing at the faint, evanescent phantom which has usurped its place. If the folding-doors of the imagination were thrown open or left a-jar, so that from the disordered couch where we lay, we could still hail the vista of the past or future, and see the gay and gorgeous visions floating at a distance, however denied to our embrace, the contrast, though mortifying, might have something soothing in it, the mock-splendour might be the greater for the actual gloom: but the misery is that we cannot conceive any thing beyond or better than the present evil; we are shut up and spell-bound in that, the curtains of the mind are drawn close, we cannot escape from 'the body of this death,' our souls are conquered, dismayed, 'cooped and cabined in,' and thrown with the lumber of our corporeal frames in one corner of a neglected and solitary room. We hate ourselves and every thing else; nor does one ray of comfort 'peep through the blanket of the dark' to give us hope. How should we entertain the image of grace and beauty, when our bodies writhe with pain? To what purpose invoke the echo of some rich strain of music, when we ourselves can scarcely breathe? The very attempt is an impossibility. We give up the vain task of linking delight to agony, of urging torpor into ecstasy, which makes the very heart sick. We feel the present pain, and an impatient longing to get rid of it. This were indeed 'a consummation

devoutly to be wished': on this we are intent, in earnest, inexorable: all else is impertinence and folly; and could we but obtain *ease* (that Goddess of the infirm and suffering) at any price, we think we could forswear all other joy and all other sorrows. *Hoc erat in votis.* All other things but our disorder and its cure seem less than nothing and vanity. It assumes a palpable form; it becomes a demon, a spectre, an incubus hovering over and oppressing us: we grapple with it: it strikes its fangs into us, spreads its arms round us, infects us with its breath, glares upon us with its hideous aspect; we feel it take possession of every fibre and of every faculty; and we are at length so absorbed and fascinated by it, that we cannot divert our reflections from it for an instant, for all other things but pain (and that which we suffer most acutely,) appear to have lost their pith and power to interest. They are turned to dust and stubble. This is the reason of the fine resolutions we sometimes form in such cases, and of the vast superiority of a sick bed to the pomps and thrones of the world. We easily renounce wine when we have nothing but the taste of physic in our mouths: the rich banquet tempts us not, when 'our very gorge rises' within us: Love and Beauty fly from a bed twisted into a thousand folds by restless lassitude and tormenting cares: the nerve of pleasure is killed by the pains that shoot through the head or rack the limbs: an indigestion seizes you with its leaden grasp and giant force (down, Ambition!)—you shiver and tremble like a leaf in a fit of the ague (Avarice, let go your palsied hold!). We then are in the mood, without ghostly advice, to betake ourselves to the life of 'hermit poor,

'In pensive place obscure,'—

and should be glad to prevent the return of a fever raging in the blood by feeding on pulse, and slaking our thirst at the limpid brook. These sudden resolutions, however, or 'vows made in pain as violent and void,' are generally of short duration; the excess and the sorrow for it are alike selfish; and those repentances which are the most loud and passionate are the surest to end speedily in a relapse; for both originate in the same cause, the being engrossed by the prevailing feeling (whatever it may be), and an utter incapacity to look beyond it.

'The Devil was sick, the Devil a monk would be:
The Devil grew well, the Devil a monk was he!'

It is amazing how little effect physical suffering or local circumstances have upon the mind, except while we are subject to their immediate influence. While the impression lasts, they are every thing: when it is gone, they are nothing. We toss and tumble about in a

sick bed; we lie on our right side, we then change to the left; we stretch ourselves on our backs, we turn on our faces; we wrap ourselves up under the clothes to exclude the cold, we throw them off to escape the heat and suffocation; we grasp the pillow in agony, we fling ourselves out of bed, we walk up and down the room with hasty or feeble steps; we return into bed; we are worn out with fatigue and pain, yet can get no repose for the one, or intermission for the other; we summon all our patience, or give vent to passion and petty rage: nothing avails; we seem wedded to our disease, 'like life and death in disproportion met;' we make new efforts, try new expedients, but nothing appears to shake it off, or promise relief from our grim foe: it infixes its sharp sting into us, or overpowers us by its sickly and stunning weight: every moment is as much as we can bear, and yet there seems no end of our lengthening tortures; we are ready to faint with exhaustion, or work ourselves up to frenzy: we 'trouble deaf Heaven with our bootless prayers:' we think our last hour is come, or peevishly wish it were, to put an end to the scene; we ask questions as to the origin of evil and the necessity of pain; we 'moralise our complaints into a thousand similes'; we deny the use of medicine *in toto*, we have a full persuasion that all doctors are mad or knaves, that our object is to gain relief, and theirs (out of the perversity of human nature, or to seem wiser than we) to prevent it; we catechise the apothecary, rail at the nurse, and cannot so much as conceive the possibility that this state of things should not last for ever; we are even angry at those who would give us encouragement, as if they would make dupes or children of us; we might seek a release by poison, a halter, or the sword, but we have not strength of mind enough—our nerves are too shaken—to attempt even this poor revenge—when lo! a change comes, the spell falls off, and the next moment we forget all that has happened to us. No sooner does our disorder turn its back upon us than we laugh at it. The state we have been in, sounds like a dream, a fable; health is the order of the day, strength is ours *de jure* and *de facto*; and we discard all uncalled-for evidence to the contrary with a smile of contemptuous incredulity, just as we throw our physic-bottles out of the window! I see (as I awake from a short, uneasy doze) a golden light shine through my white window-curtains on the opposite wall:—is it the dawn of a new day, or the departing light of evening? I do not well know, for the opium 'they have drugged my posset with' has made strange havoc with my brain, and I am uncertain whether time has stood still, or advanced, or gone backward. By 'puzzling o'er the doubt,' my attention is drawn a little out of myself to external objects; and I consider whether it would not administer some relief to my monotonous

languour, if I could call up a vivid picture of an evening sky I witnessed a short while before, the white fleecy clouds, the azure vault, the verdant fields and balmy air. In vain! The wings of fancy refuse to mount from my bed-side. The air without has nothing in common with the closeness within: the clouds disappear, the sky is instantly overcast and black. I walk out in this scene soon after I recover; and with those favourite and well-known objects interposed, can no longer recall the tumbled pillow, the juleps or the labels, or the unwholesome dungeon in which I was before immured. What is contrary to our present sensations or settled habits, amalgamates indifferently with our belief: the imagination rules over imaginary themes, the senses and custom have a narrower sway, and admit but one guest at a time. It is hardly to be wondered at that we dread physical calamities so little beforehand: we think no more of them the moment after they have happened. *Out of sight, out of mind.* This will perhaps explain why all actual punishment has so little effect; it is a state contrary to nature, alien to the will. If it does not touch honour and conscience (and where these are not, how can it touch them?) it goes for nothing: and where these are, it rather sears and hardens them. The gyves, the cell, the meagre fare, the hard labour are abhorrent to the mind of the culprit on whom they are imposed, who carries the love of liberty or indulgence to licentiousness; and who throws the thought of them behind him (the moment he can evade the penalty,) with scorn and laughter,

'Like Samson his green wythes.'[1]

So, in travelling, we often meet with great fatigue and inconvenience from heat or cold, or rather accidents, and resolve never to go a journey again; but we are ready to set off on a new excursion to-morrow. We remember the landscape, the change of scene, the romantic expectation, and think no more of the heat, the noise, and dust. The body forgets its grievances, till they recur; but imagination, passion, pride, have a longer memory and quicker apprehensions. To the first the pleasure or the pain is nothing when once over; to the last it is only then that they begin to exist. The line in Metastasio,

'The worst of every evil is the fear,'

[1] The thoughts of a captive can no more get beyond his prison-walls than his limbs, unless they are busied in planning an escape; as, on the contrary, what prisoner, after effecting his escape, ever suffered them to return there, or took common precautions to prevent his own? We indulge our fancy more than we consult our interest. The sense of personal identity has almost as little influence in practice as it has foundation in theory.

is true only when applied to this latter sort.—It is curious that, on coming out of a sick-room, where one has been pent some time, and grown weak and nervous, and looking at Nature for the first time, the objects that present themselves have a very questionable and spectral appearance, the people in the street resemble flies crawling about, and seem scarce half-alive. It is we who are just risen from a torpid and unwholesome state, and who impart our imperfect feelings of existence, health, and motion to others. Or it may be that the violence and exertion of the pain we have gone through make common every-day objects seem unreal and unsubstantial. It is not till we have established ourselves in form in the sitting-room, wheeled round the arm-chair to the fire (for this makes part of our re-introduction to the ordinary modes of being in all seasons,) felt our appetite return, and taken up a book, that we can be considered as at all restored to ourselves. And even then our first sensations are rather empirical than positive; as after sleep we stretch out our hands to know whether we are awake. This is the time for reading. Books are then indeed 'a world, both pure and good,' into which we enter with all our hearts, after our revival from illness and respite from the tomb, as with the freshness and novelty of youth. They are not merely acceptable as without too much exertion they pass the time and relieve *ennui*; but from a certain suspension and deadening of the passions, and abstraction from worldly pursuits, they may be said to bring back and be friendly to the guileless and enthusiastic tone of feeling with which we formerly read them. Sickness has weaned us *pro tempore* from contest and cabal; and we are fain to be docile and children again. All strong changes in our present pursuits throw us back upon the past. This is the shortest and most complete emancipation from our late discomfiture. We wonder that any one who has read *The History of a Foundling* should labour under an indigestion; nor do we comprehend how a perusal of the *Faery Queen* should not ensure the true believer an uninterrupted succession of halcyon days. Present objects bear a retrospective meaning, and point to 'a foregone conclusion.' Returning back to life with half-strung nerves and shattered strength, we seem as when we first entered it with uncertain purposes and faltering aims. The machine has received a shock, and it moves on more tremulously than before, and not all at once in the beaten track. Startled at the approach of death, we are willing to get as far from it as we can by making a proxy of our former selves; and finding the precarious tenure by which we hold existence, and its last sands running out, we gather up and make the most of the fragments that memory has stored up for us. Every thing is seen through a medium of reflection and contrast.

We hear the sound of merry voices in the street; and this carries us back to the recollections of some country-town or village-group—

> 'We see the children sporting on the shore,
> And hear the mighty waters roaring evermore.'

A cricket chirps on the hearth, and we are reminded of Christmas gambols long ago. The very cries in the street seem to be of a former date; and the dry toast eats very much as it did—twenty years ago. A rose smells doubly sweet, after being stifled with tinctures and essences; and we enjoy the idea of a journey and an inn the more for having been bed-rid. But a book is the secret and sure charm to bring all these implied associations to a focus. I should prefer an old one, Mr. Lamb's favourite, the *Journey to Lisbon*; or the *Decameron*, if I could get it; but if a new one, let it be *Paul Clifford*. That book has the singular advantage of being written by a gentleman, and not about his own class. The characters he commemorates are every moment at fault between life and death, hunger and a *forced loan* on the public; and therefore the interest they take in themselves, and which we take in them, has no cant or affectation in it, but is 'lively, audible, and full of vent.' A set of well-dressed gentlemen picking their teeth with a graceful air after dinner, endeavouring to keep their cravats from the slightest discomposure, and saying the most insipid things in the most insipid manner, do not make a *scene*. Well, then, I have got the new paraphrase on the *Beggar's Opera*, am fairly embarked on it; and at the end of the first volume, where I am galloping across the heath with the three highwaymen, while the moon is shining full upon them, feel my nerves so braced, and my spirits so exhilarated, that, to say truth, I am scarce sorry for the occasion that has thrown me upon the work and the author—have quite forgot my *Sick Room*, and am more than half ready to recant the doctrine that a *Free-Admission* to the theatre is

> —'The true pathos and sublime
> Of human life':—

for I feel as I read that if the stage shows us the masks of men and the pageant of the world, books let us into their souls and lay open to us the secrets of our own. They are the first and last, the most home-felt, the most heart-felt of all our enjoyments.

# FOOTMEN

*The New Monthly Magazine.*] [*September*, 1830.

Footmen are no part of Christianity; but they are a very necessary appendage to our happy Constitution in Church and State. What would the bishop's mitre be without these grave supporters to his dignity? Even the plain presbyter does not dispense with his decent serving-man to stand behind his chair and load his duly emptied plate with beef and pudding, at which the genius of Ude turns pale. What would become of the coronet-coach filled with elegant and languid forms, if it were not for the triple row of powdered, laced, and liveried footmen, clustering, fluttering, and lounging behind it? What an idea do we not conceive of the fashionable *belle* who is making the most of her time and tumbling over silks and satins within at Sewell and Cross's, or at the Bazaar in Soho-square, from the tall lacquey in blue and silver with gold-headed cane, cocked-hat, white thread stockings and large calves to his legs, who stands as her representative without! The sleek shopman appears at the door, at an understood signal the livery-servant starts from his position, the coach-door flies open, the steps are let down, the young lady enters the carriage as young ladies are taught to step into carriages, the footman closes the the door, mounts behind, and the glossy vehicle rolls off, bearing its lovely burden and her gaudy attendant from the gaze of the gaping crowd! Is there not a spell in beauty, a charm in rank and fashion, that one would almost wish to be this fellow—to obey its nod, to watch its looks, to breathe but by its permission, and to live but for its use, its scorn, or pride?

Footmen are in general looked upon as a sort of supernumeraries in society—they have no place assigned them in any Scotch Encyclopædia—they do not come under any of the heads in Mr. Mill's Elements, or Mr. Maculloch's Principles of Political Economy; and they nowhere have had impartial justice done them, except in Lady Booby's love for one of that order. But if not 'the Corinthian capitals of polished society,' they are 'a graceful ornament to the civil order.' Lords and ladies could not do without them. Nothing exists in this world but by contrast. A foil is necessary to make the plainest truths self-evident. It is the very insignificance, the non-entity as it were of the gentlemen of the cloth, that constitutes their importance, and makes them an indispensable feature in the social system, by setting off the pretensions of their superiors to the best advantage. What would be the good of having a will of our own, if we had not others about us who are deprived of all will of their own, and who wear a

badge to say 'I serve?' How can we show that we are the lords of the creation but by reducing others to the condition of machines, who never move but at the beck of our caprices? Is not the plain suit of the master wonderfully relieved by the borrowed trappings and mock-finery of his servant? You see that man on horseback who keeps at some distance behind another, who follows him as his shadow, turns as he turns, and as he passes or speaks to him, lifts his hand to his hat and observes the most profound attention—what is the difference between these two men? The one is as well mounted, as well fed, is younger and seemingly in better health than the other; but between these two there are perhaps seven or eight classes of society, each of whom is dependent on and trembles at the frown of the other—it is a nobleman and his lacquey. Let any one take a stroll towards the West-end of the town, South Audley or Upper Grosvenor-street; it is then he will feel himself first entering into the *beau-idéal* of civilized life, a society composed entirely of lords and footmen! Deliver me from the filth and cellars of St. Giles's, from the shops of Holborn and the Strand, from all that appertains to middle and to low life; and commend me to the streets with the straw at the doors and hatchments overhead to tell us of those who are just born or who are just dead, and with groups of footmen lounging on the steps and insulting the passengers —it is then I feel the true dignity and imaginary pretensions of human nature realised! There is here none of the squalidness of poverty, none of the hardships of daily labour, none of the anxiety and petty artifice of trade; life's business is changed into a romance, a summer's-dream, and nothing painful, disgusting, or vulgar intrudes. All is on a liberal and handsome scale. The true ends and benefits of society are here enjoyed and bountifully lavished, and all the trouble and misery banished, and not even allowed so much as to exist in thought. Those who would find the real Utopia, should look for it somewhere about Park-lane or May Fair. It is there only any feasible approach to equality is made—for it is *like master like man.* Here, as I look down Curzon-street, or catch a glimpse of the taper spire of South Audley Chapel, or the family-arms on the gate of Chesterfield-House, the vista of years opens to me, and I recall the period of the triumph of Mr. Burke's 'Reflections on the French Revolution,' and the overthrow of 'The Rights of Man!' You do not indeed penetrate to the interior of the mansion where sits the stately possessor, luxurious and refined; but you draw your inference from the lazy, pampered, motley crew poured forth from his portals. This mealy-coated, moth-like, butterfly-generation, seem to have no earthly business but to enjoy themselves. Their green liveries accord with the budding leaves and spreading branches of the trees in Hyde Park

—they seem 'like brothers of the groves'—their red faces and powdered heads harmonise with the blossoms of the neighbouring almond-trees, that shoot their sprays over old-fashioned brick-walls. They come forth like grasshoppers in June, as numerous and as noisy. They bask in the sun and laugh in your face. Not only does the master enjoy an uninterrupted leisure and tranquillity—those in his employment have nothing to do. He wants drones, not drudges, about him, to share his superfluity, and give a haughty pledge of his exemption from care. They grow sleek and wanton, saucy and supple. From being independent of the world, they acquire the look of *gentlemen's gentlemen*. There is a cast of the aristocracy, with a slight shade of distinction. The saying, 'Tell me your company, and I'll tell you your manners,' may be applied *cum grano salis* to the servants in great families. Mr. N—— knew an old butler who had lived with a nobleman so long, and had learned to imitate his walk, look, and way of speaking, so exactly that it was next to impossible to tell them apart. See the porter in the great leather-chair in the hall—how big, and burly, and self-important he looks; while my Lord's gentleman (the politician of the family) is reading the second edition of 'The Courier' (once more in request) at the side window, and the footman is romping, or taking tea with the maids in the kitchen below. A match-girl meanwhile plies her shrill trade at the railing; or a gipsey-woman passes with her rustic wares through the street, avoiding the closer haunts of the city. What a pleasant farce is that of 'High Life Below Stairs!' What a careless life do the domestics of the Great lead! For, not to speak of the reflected self-importance of their masters and mistresses, and the contempt with which they look down on the herd of mankind, they have only to eat and drink their fill, talk the scandal of the neighbourhood, laugh at the follies, or assist the intrigues of their betters, till they themselves fall in love, marry, set up a public house, (the only thing they are fit for,) and without habits of industry, resources in themselves, or self-respect, and drawing fruitless comparisons with the past, are, of all people, the most miserable! Service is no inheritance; and when it fails, there is not a more helpless, or more worthless set of devils in the world. Mr. C—— used to say he should like to be a footman to some elderly lady of quality, to carry her prayer-book to church, and place her cassock right for her. There can be no doubt that this would have been better, and quite as useful as the life he has led, dancing attendance on Prejudice, but flirting with Paradox in such a way as to cut himself out of the old lady's will. For my part, if I had to choose, I should prefer the service of a young mistress, and might share the fate of the footman recorded in heroic verse by

Lady Wortley Montagu. Certainly it can be no hard duty, though a sort of *forlorn hope*, to have to follow three sisters, or youthful friends, (resembling the three Graces,) at a slow pace, and with grave demeanour, from Cumberland Gate to Kensington Gardens—to be there shut out, a privation enhancing the privilege, and making the sense of distant, respectful, idolatrous admiration more intense—and then, after a brief interval lost in idle chat, or idler reverie, to have to follow them back again, observing, not observed, to keep within call, to watch every gesture, to see the breeze play with the light tresses or lift the morning robe aside, to catch the half-suppressed laugh, and hear the low murmur of indistinct words and wishes, like the music of the spheres. An *amateur footman* would seem a more rational occupation than that of an amateur author, or an amateur artist. An insurmountable barrier, if it excludes passion, does not banish sentiment, but draws an atmosphere of superstitious, trembling apprehension round the object of so much attention and respect; nothing makes women seem so much like angels as always to see, never to converse with them; and those whom we have to dangle a cane after must, to a lacquey of any spirit, appear worthy to wield sceptres.

But of all situations of this kind, the most enviable is that of a lady's maid in a family travelling abroad. In the obtuseness of foreigners to the nice gradations of English refinement and manners, the maid has not seldom a chance of being taken for the mistress—a circumstance never to be forgot! See our Abigail mounted in the *dicky* with my Lord, or John, snug and comfortable—setting out on the grand tour as fast as four horses can carry her, whirled over the 'vine-covered hills and gay regions of France,' crossing the Alps and Apennines in breathless terror and wonder—frightened at a precipice, laughing at her escape—coming to the inn, going into the kitchen to see what is to be had—not speaking a word of the language, except what she picks up, 'as pigeons pick up peas:'—the bill paid, the passport *visé*, the horses put to, and *au route* again—seeing every thing, and understanding nothing, in a full tide of health, fresh air, and animal spirits, and without one qualm of taste or sentiment, and arriving at Florence, the city of palaces, with its amphitheatre of hills and olives, without suspecting that such a person as Boccacio, Dante, or Galileo, had ever lived there, while her young mistress is puzzled with the varieties of the Tuscan dialect, is disappointed in the Arno, and cannot tell what to make of the statue of David by Michael Angelo, in the Great Square. The difference is, that the young lady, on her return, has something to think of; but the maid absolutely forgets every thing, and is only giddy and out of breath, as if she had been up in a balloon.

# FOOTMEN

'No more: where ignorance is bliss,
'Tis folly to be wise!'

English servants abroad, notwithstanding the comforts they enjoy, and although travelling as it were *en famille*, must be struck with the ease and familiar footing on which foreigners live with their domestics, compared with the distance and reserve with which they are treated. The housemaid (*la bonne*) sits down in the room, or walks abreast with you in the street; and the valet who waits behind his master's chair at table, gives Monsieur his advice or opinion without being asked for it. We need not wonder at this familiarity and freedom, when we consider that those who allowed it could (formerly at least, when the custom began) send those who transgressed but in the smallest degree to the Bastille or the galleys at their pleasure. The licence was attended with perfect impunity. With us the law leaves less to discretion; and by interposing a real independence (and plea of right) between the servant and master, does away with the appearance of it on the surface of manners. The insolence and tyranny of the Aristocracy fell more on the trades-people and mechanics than on their domestics, who were attached to them by a semblance of feudal ties. Thus an upstart lady of quality (an imitator of the old school) would not deign to speak to a milliner while fitting on her dress, but gave her orders to her waiting-women to tell her what to do. Can we wonder at twenty *reigns of terror* to efface such a feeling?

I have alluded to the inclination in servants in great houses to ape the manners of their superiors, and to their sometimes succeeding. What facilitates the metamorphosis is, that the Great, in their character of *courtiers*, are a sort of footmen in their turn. There is the same crouching to interest and authority in either case, with the same surrender or absence of personal dignity—the same submission to the trammels of outward form, with the same suppression of inward impulses—the same degrading finery, the same pretended deference in the eye of the world, and the same lurking contempt from being admitted behind the scenes, the same heartlessness, and the same eye-service—in a word, they are alike puppets governed by motives not their own, machines made of coarser or finer materials. It is not, therefore, surprising, if the most finished courtier of the day cannot, by a vulgar eye, be distinguished from a gentleman's servant. M. de Bausset, in his amusing and excellent *Memoirs*, makes it an argument of the legitimacy of Napoleon's authority, that from denying it, it would follow that his lords of the bed-chamber were valets, and he himself (as prefect of the palace) no better than head-

cook. The inference is logical enough. According to the author's view, there was no other difference between the retainers of the court and the kitchen than the rank of the master!

I remember hearing it said that 'all men were equal but footmen.' But of all footmen the lowest class is *literary footmen*. These consist of persons who, without a single grain of knowledge, taste, or feeling, put on the livery of learning, mimic its phrases by rote, and are retained in its service by dint of quackery and assurance alone. As they have none of the essence, they have all the externals of men of gravity and wisdom. They wear green spectacles, walk with a peculiar strut, thrust themselves into the acquaintance of persons they hear talked of, get introduced into the clubs, are seen reading books they do not understand at the Museum and public libraries, dine (if they can) with lords or officers of the Guards, abuse any party as *low* to show what fine gentlemen they are, and the next week join the same party to raise their own credit and gain a little consequence, give themselves out as wits, critics, and philosophers (and as they have never done any thing, no man can contradict them), and have a great knack of turning editors, and not paying their contributors. If you get five pounds from one of them, he never forgives it. With the proceeds thus appropriated, the book-worm graduates a dandy, hires expensive apartments, sports a tandem, and it is inferred that he must be a great author who can support such an appearance with his pen, and a great genius who can conduct so many learned works while his time is devoted to the gay, the fair, and the rich. This introduces him to new editorships, to new and more select friendships, and to more frequent and importunate demands from debts and duns. At length the bubble bursts and disappears, and you hear no more of our classical adventurer, except from the invectives and self-reproaches of those who took him for a great scholar from his wearing green spectacles and Wellington-boots. Such a candidate for literary honours bears the same relation to the man of letters, that the valet with his second-hand finery and servile airs does to his master.

## ON THE WANT OF MONEY

*The Monthly Magazine.*] [*January*, 1827.

It is hard to be without money. To get on without it is like travelling in a foreign country without a passport—you are stopped, suspected, and made ridiculous at every turn, besides being subjected to the most serious inconveniences. The want of money I here allude to is not altogether that which arises from absolute poverty—

for where there is a downright absence of the common necessaries of life, this must be remedied by incessant hard labour, and the least we can receive in return is a supply of our daily wants—but that uncertain, casual, precarious mode of existence, in which the temptation to spend remains after the means are exhausted, the want of money joined with the hope and possibility of getting it, the intermediate state of difficulty and suspense between the last guinea or shilling and the next that we may have the good luck to encounter. This gap, this unwelcome interval constantly recurring, however shabbily got over, is really full of many anxieties, misgivings, mortifications, meannesses, and deplorable embarrassments of every description. I may attempt (this essay is not a fanciful speculation) to enlarge upon a few of them.

It is hard to go without one's dinner through sheer distress, but harder still to go without one's breakfast. Upon the strength of that first and aboriginal meal, one may muster courage to face the difficulties before one, and to dare the worst: but to be roused out of one's warm bed, and perhaps a profound oblivion of care, with golden dreams (for poverty does not prevent golden dreams), and told there is nothing for breakfast, is cold comfort for which one's half-strung nerves are not prepared, and throws a damp upon the prospects of the day. It is a bad beginning. A man without a breakfast is a poor creature, unfit to go in search of one, to meet the frown of the world, or to borrow a shilling of a friend. He may beg at the corner of a street—nothing is too mean for the tone of his feelings—robbing on the highway is out of the question, as requiring too much courage, and some opinion of a man's self. It is, indeed, as old Fuller, or some worthy of that age, expresses it, 'the heaviest stone which melancholy can throw at a man,' to learn, the first thing after he rises in the morning, or even to be dunned with it in bed, that there is no loaf, tea, or butter in the house, and that the baker, the grocer, and butterman have refused to give any farther credit. This is taking one sadly at a disadvantage. It is striking at one's spirit and resolution in their very source,—the stomach—it is attacking one on the side of hunger and mortification at once; it is casting one into the very mire of humility and Slough of Despond. The worst is, to know what face to put upon the matter, what excuse to make to the servants, what answer to send to the tradespeople; whether to laugh it off, or be grave, or angry, or indifferent; in short, to know how to parry off an evil which you cannot help. What a luxury, what a God's-send in such a dilemma, to find a half-crown which had slipped through a hole in the lining of your waistcoat, a crumpled bank-note in your breeches-pocket, or a guinea clinking in the bottom of your trunk, which had

been thoughtlessly left there out of a former heap! Vain hope! Unfounded illusion! The experienced in such matters know better, and laugh in their sleeves at so improbable a suggestion. Not a corner, not a cranny, not a pocket, not a drawer has been left unrummaged, or has not been subjected over and over again to more than the strictness of a custom-house scrutiny. Not the slightest rustle of a piece of bank-paper, not the gentlest pressure of a piece of hard metal, but would have given notice of its hiding-place with electrical rapidity, long before, in such circumstances. All the variety of pecuniary resources which form a legal tender on the current coin of the realm, are assuredly drained, exhausted to the last farthing before this time. But is there nothing in the house that one can turn to account? Is there not an old family-watch, or piece of plate, or a ring, or some worthless trinket that one could part with? nothing belonging to one's-self or a friend, that one could raise the wind upon, till something better turns up? At this moment an old clothes-man passes, and his deep, harsh tones sound like an intended insult on one's distress, and banish the thought of applying for his assistance, as one's eye glanced furtively at an old hat or a great coat, hung up behind a closet-door. Humiliating contemplations! Miserable uncertainty! One hesitates, and the opportunity is gone by; for without one's breakfast, one has not the resolution to do any thing!—The late Mr. Sheridan was often reduced to this unpleasant predicament. Possibly he had little appetite for breakfast himself; but the servants complained bitterly on this head, and said that Mrs. Sheridan was sometimes kept waiting for a couple of hours, while they had to hunt through the neighbourhood, and beat up for coffee, eggs, and French rolls. The same perplexity in this instance appears to have extended to the providing for the dinner; for so sharp-set were they, that to cut short a debate with a butcher's apprentice about leaving a leg of mutton without the money, the cook clapped it into the pot: the butcher's boy, probably used to such encounters, with equal coolness took it out again, and marched off with it in his tray in triumph. It required a man to be the author of The School for Scandal, to run the gauntlet of such disagreeable occurrences every hour of the day. There was one comfort, however, that poor Sheridan had: he did not foresee that Mr. Moore would write his Life![1]

[1] Taylor, of the Opera-House, used to say of Sheridan, that he could not pull off his hat to him in the street without its costing him fifty pounds; and if he stopped to speak to him, it was a hundred. No one could be a stronger instance than he was of what is called *living from hand to mouth*. He was always in want of money, though he received vast sums which he must have disbursed; and yet nobody can

The going without a dinner is another of the miseries of wanting money, though one can bear up against this calamity better than the

tell what became of them, for he paid nobody. He spent his wife's fortune (sixteen hundred pounds) in a six weeks' jaunt to Bath, and returned to town as poor as a rat. Whenever he and his son were invited out into the country, they always went in two post-chaises and four ; he in one, and his son Tom following in another. This is the secret of those who live in a round of extravagance, and are at the same time always in debt and difficulty—they throw away all the ready money they get upon any new-fangled whim or project that comes in their way, and never think of paying off old scores, which of course accumulate to a dreadful amount. 'Such gain the cap of him who makes them fine, yet keeps his book uncrossed.' Sheridan once wanted to take Mrs. Sheridan a very handsome dress down into the country, and went to Barber and Nunn's to order it, saying he must have it by such a day, but promising they should have ready money. Mrs. Barber (I think it was) made answer that the time was short, but that ready money was a very charming thing, and that he should have it. Accordingly, at the time appointed she brought the dress, which came to five-and-twenty pounds, and it was sent in to Mr. Sheridan : who sent out a Mr. Grimm (one of his jackalls) to say he admired it exceedingly, and that he was sure Mrs. Sheridan would be delighted with it, but he was sorry to have nothing under a hundred pound bank-note in the house. She said she had come provided for such an accident, and could give change for a hundred, two hundred, or five hundred pound note, if it were necessary. Grimm then went back to his principal for farther instructions : who made an excuse that he had no stamped receipt by him. For this, Mrs. B. said, she was also provided ; she had brought one in her pocket. At each message, she could hear them laughing heartily in the next room at the idea of having met with their match for once ; and presently after, Sheridan came out in high good-humour, and paid her the amount of her bill, in ten, five, and one pounds. Once when a creditor brought him a bill for payment, which had often been presented before, and the man complained of its soiled and tattered state, and said he was quite ashamed to see it, 'I 'll tell you what I 'd advise you to do with it, my friend,' said Sheridan, 'take it home, and write it upon *parchment* !' He once mounted a horse which a horse-dealer was shewing off near a coffee-house at the bottom of St. James's-street, rode it to Tattersall's, and sold it, and walked quietly back to the spot from which he set out. The owner was furious, swore he would be the death of him ; and, in quarter of an hour afterwards they were seen sitting together over a bottle of wine in the coffee-house, the horse-jockey with the tears running down his face at Sheridan's jokes, and almost ready to hug him as an honest fellow. Sheridan's house and lobby were beset with duns every morning, who were told that Mr. Sheridan was not yet up, and shewn into the several rooms on each side of the entrance. As soon as he had breakfasted, he asked, 'Are those doors all shut, John ?' and, being assured they were, marched out very deliberately between them, to the astonishment of his self-invited guests, who soon found the bird was flown. I have heard one of his old City friends declare, that such was the effect of his frank, cordial manner, and insinuating eloquence, that he was always afraid to go to ask him for a debt of long standing, lest he should borrow twice as much. A play had been put off one night, or a favourite actor did not appear, and the audience demanded to have their money back again : but when they came to the door, they were told by the check-takers there was none for them, for that Mr. Sheridan had been in the mean time, and had carried off all the money in the till. He used often to get the old cobbler who kept a stall under the ruins of Drury Lane to broil a beef-steak for him, and take

former, which really 'blights the tender blossom and promise of the day.' With one good meal, one may hold a parley with hunger and moralize upon temperance. One has time to turn one's-self and look about one—to 'screw one's courage to the sticking-place,' to graduate the scale of disappointment, and stave off appetite till supper-time. You gain time, and time in this weather-cock world is everything. You may dine at two, or at six, or seven—as most convenient. You may in the meanwhile receive an invitation to dinner, or some one (not knowing how you are circumstanced) may send you a present of a haunch of venison or a brace of pheasants from the country, or a distant relation may die and leave you a legacy, or a patron may call and overwhelm you with his smiles and bounty,

'As kind as kings upon their coronation-day;'

or there is no saying what may happen. One may wait for dinner—breakfast admits of no delay, of no interval interposed between that and our first waking thoughts.[1] Besides, there are shifts and devices, shabby and mortifying enough, but still available in case of need.

their dinner together. On the night that Drury Lane was burnt down, Sheridan was in the House of Commons, making a speech, though he could hardly stand without leaning his hands on the table, and it was with some difficulty he was forced away, urging the plea, 'What signified the concerns of a private individual, compared to the good of the state?' When he got to Covent-Garden, he went into the Piazza Coffee-house, to steady himself with another bottle, and then strolled out to the end of the Piazza to look at the progress of the fire. Here he was accosted by Charles Kemble and Fawcett, who complimented him on the calmness with which he seemed to regard so great a loss. He declined this praise, and said—'Gentlemen, there are but three things in human life that in my opinion ought to disturb a wise man's patience. The first of these is bodily pain, and that (whatever the ancient stoics may have said to the contrary) is too much for any man to bear without flinching: this I have felt severely, and I know it to be the case. The second is the loss of a friend whom you have dearly loved; that, gentlemen, is a great evil: this I have also felt, and I know it to be too much for any man's fortitude. And the third is the consciousness of having done an unjust action. That, gentlemen, is a great evil, a very great evil, too much for any man to endure the reflection of; but that' (laying his hand upon his heart,) 'but that, thank God, I have never felt!' I have been told that these were nearly the very words, except that he appealed to the *mens conscia recti* very emphatically three or four times over, by an excellent authority, Mr. Mathews the player, who was on the spot at the time, a gentleman whom the public admire deservedly, but with whose real talents and nice discrimination of character his friends only are acquainted. Sheridan's reply to the watchman who had picked him up in the street, and who wanted to know who he was, 'I am Mr. Wilberforce!'—is well known, and shews that, however frequently he might be at a loss for money, he never wanted wit!

[1] In Scotland, it seems, the draught of ale or whiskey with which you commence the day, is emphatically called 'taking your *morning*.'

# ON THE WANT OF MONEY

How many expedients are there in this great city (London), time out of mind and times without number, resorted to by the dilapidated and thrifty speculator, to get through this grand difficulty without utter failure! One may dive into a cellar, and dine on boiled beef and carrots for tenpence, with the knives and forks chained to the table, and jostled by greasy elbows that seem to make such a precaution not unnecessary (hunger is proof against indignity!)—or one may contrive to part with a superfluous article of wearing apparel, and carry home a mutton-chop and cook it in a garret; or one may drop in at a friend's at the dinner-hour, and be asked to stay or not; or one may walk out and take a turn in the Park, about the time, and return home to tea, so as at least to avoid the sting of the evil—the appearance of not having dined. You then have the laugh on your side, having deceived the gossips, and can submit to the want of a sumptuous repast without murmuring, having saved your pride, and made a virtue of necessity. I say all this may be done by a man without a family (for what business has a man without money with one?—*See English Malthus and Scotch Macculloch*)—and it is only my intention here to bring forward such instances of the want of money as are tolerable both in theory and practice. I once lived on coffee (as an experiment) for a fortnight together, while I was finishing the copy of a half-length portrait of a Manchester manufacturer, who had died worth a plum. I rather slurred over the coat, which was a reddish brown, 'of formal cut,' to receive my five guineas, with which I went to market myself, and dined on sausages and mashed potatoes, and while they were getting ready, and I could hear them hissing in the pan, read a volume of Gil Blas, containing the account of the fair Aurora. This was in the days of my youth. Gentle reader, do not smile! Neither Monsieur de Very, nor Louis XVIII., over an oyster-pâté, nor Apicius himself, ever understood the meaning of the word *luxury*, better than I did at that moment! If the want of money has its drawbacks and disadvantages, it is not without its contrasts and counterbalancing effects, for which I fear nothing else can make us amends. Amelia's *hashed mutton* is immortal; and there is something amusing, though carried to excess and caricature (which is very unusual with the author) in the contrivances of old Caleb, in 'The Bride of Lammermuir,' for raising the wind at breakfast, dinner, and supper-time. I recollect a ludicrous instance of a disappointment in a dinner which happened to a person of my acquaintance some years ago. He was not only poor but a very poor creature, as will be imagined. His wife had laid by fourpence (their whole remaining stock) to pay for the baking of a shoulder of mutton and potatoes, which they had in the house, and on her return home

from some errand, she found he had expended it in purchasing a new string for a guitar. On this occasion a witty friend quoted the lines from Milton :

> 'And ever against *eating* cares,
> Wrap me in soft Lydian airs!'

Defoe, in his *Life of Colonel Jack*, gives a striking picture of his young beggarly hero sitting with his companion for the first time in his life at a three-penny ordinary, and the delight with which he relished the hot smoking soup, and the airs with which he called about him—'and every time,' he says, 'we called for bread, or beer, or whatever it might be, the waiter answered, "coming, gentlemen, coming;" and this delighted me more than all the rest!' It was about this time, as the same pithy author expresses it, 'the Colonel took upon him to wear a shirt!' Nothing can be finer than the whole of the feeling conveyed in the commencement of this novel, about wealth and finery from the immediate contrast of privation and poverty. One would think it a labour, like the Tower of Babel, to build up a beau and a fine gentleman about town. The little vagabond's admiration of the old man at the banking-house, who sits surrounded by heaps of gold as if it were a dream or poetic vision, and his own eager anxious visits, day by day, to the hoard he had deposited in the hollow tree, are in the very foremost style of truth and nature. See the same intense feeling expressed in Luke's address to his riches in the *City Madam*, and in the extraordinary raptures of the 'Spanish Rogue' in contemplating and hugging his ingots of pure gold and Spanish pieces of eight: to which Mr. Lamb has referred in excuse for the rhapsodies of some of our elder poets on this subject, which to our present more refined and tamer apprehensions sound like blasphemy.[1] In earlier times, before the diffusion of luxury, of knowledge, and other sources of enjoyment had become common, and acted as a diversion to the cravings of avarice, the passionate admiration, the idolatry, the hunger and thirst of wealth and all its precious symbols, was a kind of madness or hallucination, and Mammon was truly worshipped as a god!

It is among the miseries of the want of money, not to be able to pay your reckoning at an inn—or, if you have just enough to do that, to have nothing left for the waiter;—to be stopped at a turnpike gate, and forced to turn back;—not to venture to call a hackney-coach in a shower of rain—(when you have only one shilling left yourself, it is a *bore* to have it taken out of your pocket by a friend,

[1] Shylock's lamentation over the loss of 'his daughter and his ducats,' is another case in point.

who comes into your house eating peaches in a hot summer's day, and desiring you to pay for the coach in which he visits you);—not to be able to purchase a lottery-ticket, by which you might make your fortune, and get out of all your difficulties;—or to find a letter lying for you at a country post-office, and not to have money in your pocket to free it, and be obliged to return for it the next day. The letter so unseasonably withheld may be supposed to contain money, and in this case there is a foretaste, a sort of actual possession taken through the thin folds of the paper and the wax, which in some measure indemnifies us for the delay: the bank-note, the post-bill seems to smile upon us, and shake hands through its prison bars;—or it may be a love-letter, and then the tantalization is at its height: to be deprived in this manner of the only consolation that can make us amends for the want of money, by this very want—to fancy you can see the name—to try to get a peep at the hand-writing—to touch the seal, and yet not dare to break it open—is provoking indeed—the climax of amorous and gentlemanly distress. Players are sometimes reduced to great extremity, by the seizure of their scenes and dresses, or (what is called) *the property of the theatre*, which hinders them from acting; as authors are prevented from finishing a work, for want of money to buy the books necessary to be consulted on some material point or circumstance, in the progress of it. There is a set of poor devils, who live upon a printed *prospectus* of a work that never will be written, for which they solicit your name and half-a-crown. Decayed actresses take an annual benefit at one of the theatres; there are patriots who live upon periodical subscriptions, and critics who go about the country lecturing on poetry. I confess I envy none of these; but there are persons who, provided they can live, care not how they live—who are fond of display, even when it implies exposure; who court notoriety under every shape, and embrace the public with demonstrations of wantonness. There are genteel beggars, who send up a well-penned epistle requesting the loan of a shilling. Your snug bachelors and retired old-maids pretend they can distinguish the knock of one of these at their door. I scarce know which I dislike the most—the patronage that affects to bring premature genius into notice, or that extends its piecemeal, formal charity towards it in its decline. I hate your Literary Funds, and Funds for Decayed Artists—they are corporations for the encouragement of meanness, pretence, and insolence. Of all people, I cannot tell how it is, but players appear to me the best able to do without money. They are a privileged class. If not exempt from the common calls of necessity and business, they are enabled 'by their so potent art' to soar above them. As they make imaginary ills their own, real ones become

imaginary, sit light upon them, and are thrown off with comparatively little trouble. Their life is theatrical—its various accidents are the shifting scenes of a play—rags and finery, tears and laughter, a mock-dinner or a real one, a crown of jewels or of straw, are to them nearly the same. I am sorry I cannot carry on this reasoning to actors who are past their prime. The gilding of their profession is then worn off, and shews the false metal beneath; vanity and hope (the props of their existence) have had their day; their former gaiety and carelessness serve as a foil to their present discouragements; and want and infirmities press upon them at once. 'We know what we are,' as Ophelia says, 'but we know not what we shall be.' A workhouse seems the last resort of poverty and distress—a *parish-pauper* is another name for all that is mean and to be deprecated in human existence. But that name is but an abstraction, an average term—'within that lowest deep, a lower deep may open to receive us.' I heard not long ago of a poor man, who had been for many years a respectable tradesman in London, and who was compelled to take shelter in one of those receptacles of age and wretchedness, and who said he could be contented with it—he had his regular meals, a nook in the chimney, and a coat to his back—but he was forced to lie three in a bed, and one of the three was out of his mind and crazy, and his great delight was, when the others fell asleep, to tweak their noses, and flourish his night-cap over their heads, so that they were obliged to lie awake, and hold him down between them. One should be quite mad to bear this. To what a point of insignificance may not human life dwindle! To what fine, agonizing threads will it not cling! Yet this man had been a lover in his youth, in a humble way, and still begins his letters to an old-maid (his former flame), who sometimes comforts him by listening to his complaints, and treating him to a dish of weak tea, 'My dear Miss Nancy!'

Another of the greatest miseries of a want of money, is the tap of a dun at your door, or the previous silence when you expect it—the uneasy sense of shame at the approach of your tormentor; the wish to meet, and yet to shun the encounter; the disposition to bully; the fear of irritating; the real and the sham excuses; the submission to impertinence; the assurances of a speedy supply; the disingenuousness you practise on him and on yourself; the degradation in the eyes of others and your own. Oh! it is wretched to have to confront a just and oft-repeated demand, and to be without the means to satisfy it; to deceive the confidence that has been placed in you; to forfeit your credit; to be placed at the power of another, to be indebted to his lenity; to stand convicted of having played the knave or the fool; and to have no way left to escape contempt, but by incurring pity.

# ON THE WANT OF MONEY

The suddenly meeting a creditor on turning the corner of a street, whom you have been trying to avoid for months, and had persuaded you were several hundred miles off, discomposes the features and shatters the nerves for some time. It is also a serious annoyance to be unable to repay a loan to a friend, who is in want of it—nor is it very pleasant to be so hard-run, as to be induced to request the repayment. It is difficult to decide the preference between debts of honour and legal demands; both are bad enough, and almost a fair excuse for driving any one into the hands of money-lenders—to whom an application, if successful, is accompanied with a sense of being in the vulture's gripe—a reflection akin to that of those who formerly sold themselves to the devil—or, if unsuccessful, is rendered doubly galling by the smooth, civil leer of cool contempt with which you are dismissed, as if they had escaped from your clutches—not you from their's. If any thing can be added to the mortification and distress arising from straitened circumstances, it is when vanity comes in to barb the dart of poverty—when you have a picture on which you had calculated, rejected from an Exhibition, or a manuscript returned on your hands, or a tragedy damned, at the very instant when your cash and credit are at the lowest ebb. This forlorn and helpless feeling has reached its *acme* in the prison-scene in Hogarth's Rake's Progress, where his unfortunate hero has just dropped the Manager's letter from his hands, with the laconic answer written in it:—'Your play has been read, and won't do.'[1] To feel poverty is bad; but to feel it with the additional sense of our incapacity to shake it off, and that we have not merit enough to retrieve our circumstances—and, instead of being held up to admiration, are exposed to persecution and insult—is the last stage of human infirmity. My friend, Mr. Leigh Hunt (no one is better qualified than he to judge) thinks, that the most pathetic story in the world is that of Smollett's fine gentleman and lady in gaol, who have been roughly handled by the mob for some paltry attempt at raising the wind, and she exclaims in extenuation of the pitiful figure he cuts, 'Ah! he was a fine fellow once!'

It is justly remarked by the poet, that poverty has no greater inconvenience attached to it than that of making men ridiculous. It not only has this disadvantage with respect to ourselves, but it often shews us others in a very contemptible point of view. People are not soured by misfortune, but by the reception they meet with in it. When we do not want assistance, every one is ready to obtrude it on us, as if it were advice. If we do, they shun us instantly. They

[1] It is provoking enough, and makes one look like a fool, to receive a printed notice of a blank in the last lottery, with a postscript hoping for your future favours.

anticipate the increased demand on their sympathy or bounty, and escape from it as from a falling house. It is a mistake, however, that we court the society of the rich and prosperous, merely with a view to what we can get from them. We do so, because there is something in external rank and splendour that gratifies and imposes on the imagination; just as we prefer the company of those who are in good health and spirits to that of the sickly and hypochondriacal, or as we would rather converse with a beautiful woman than with an ugly one. I never knew but one man who would lend his money freely and fearlessly in spite of circumstances (if you were likely to pay him, he grew peevish, and would pick a quarrel with you). I can only account for this from a certain sanguine buoyancy and magnificence of spirit, not deterred by distant consequences, or damped by untoward appearances. I have been told by those, who shared of the same bounty, that it was not owing to generosity, but ostentation—if so, he kept his ostentation a secret from me, for I never received a hint or a look from which I could infer that I was not the lender, and he the person obliged. Neither was I expected to keep in the background or play an under-part. On the contrary, I was encouraged to do my best; my dormant faculties roused, the ease of my circumstances was on condition of the freedom and independence of my mind, my lucky hits were applauded, and I was paid to shine. I am not ashamed of such patronage as this, nor do I regret any circumstance relating to it but its termination. People endure existence even in Paris: the rows of chairs on the Boulevards are gay with smiles and dress: the saloons, they say, are brilliant; at the theatre there is Mademoiselle Mars—what is all this to me? After a certain period, we live only in the past. Give me back one single evening at Boxhill, after a stroll in the deep-empurpled woods, before Buonaparte was yet beaten, 'with wine of attic taste,' when wit, beauty, friendship presided at the board! Oh no! Neither the time nor friends that are fled, can be recalled!—Poverty is the test of sincerity, the touchstone of civility. Even abroad, they treat you scurvily if your remittances do not arrive regularly, and though you have hitherto lived like a *Milord Anglais*. The want of money loses us friends not worth the keeping, mistresses who are naturally jilts or coquets; it cuts us out of society, to which dress and equipage are the only introduction; and deprives us of a number of luxuries and advantages of which the only good is, that they can only belong to the possessors of a large fortune. Many people are wretched because they have not money to buy a fine horse, or to hire a fine house, or to keep a carriage, or to purchase a diamond necklace, or to go to a race-ball, or to give their servants new liveries.

I cannot myself enter into all this. If I can *live to think, and think to live*, I am satisfied. Some want to possess pictures, others to collect libraries. All I wish is, sometimes, to see the one and read the other. Gray was mortified because he had not a hundred pounds to bid for a curious library; and the Duchess of —— has immortalized herself by her liberality on that occasion, and by the handsome compliment she addressed to the poet, that 'if it afforded him any satisfaction, she had been more than paid, by her pleasure in reading the *Elegy in a Country Church-yard.*'

Literally and truly, one cannot get on well in the world without money. To be in want of money, is to pass through life with little credit or pleasure; it is to live out of the world, or to be despised if you come into it; it is not to be sent for to court, or asked out to dinner, or noticed in the street; it is not to have your opinion consulted or else rejected with contempt, to have your acquirements carped at and doubted, your good things disparaged, and at last to lose the wit and the spirit to say them; it is to be scrutinized by strangers, and neglected by friends; it is to be a thrall to circumstances, an exile in a foreign land; to forego leisure, freedom, ease of body and mind, to be dependent on the good-will and caprice of others, or earn a precarious and irksome livelihood by some laborious employment: it is to be compelled to stand behind a counter, or to sit at a desk in some public office, or to marry your landlady, or not the person you would wish; or to go out to the East or West-Indies, or to get a situation as judge abroad, and return home with a liver-complaint; or to be a law-stationer, or a scrivener or scavenger, or newspaper reporter; or to read law and sit in court without a brief, or be deprived of the use of your fingers by transcribing Greek manuscripts, or to be a seal engraver and pore yourself blind; or to go upon the stage, or try some of the Fine Arts; with all your pains, anxiety, and hopes, most probably to fail, or, if you succeed, after the exertions of years, and undergoing constant distress of mind and fortune, to be assailed on every side with envy, back-biting, and falsehood, or to be a favourite with the public for awhile, and then thrown into the back-ground—or a jail, by the fickleness of taste and some new favourite; to be full of enthusiasm and extravagance in youth, of chagrin and disappointment in after-life; to be jostled by the rabble because you do not ride in your coach, or avoided by those who know your worth and shrink from it as a claim on their respect or their purse; to be a burden to your relations, or unable to do any thing for them; to be ashamed to venture into crowds; to have cold comfort at home; to lose by degrees your confidence and any talent you might possess; to grow crabbed, morose, and querulous, dis-

satisfied with every one, but most so with yourself; and plagued out of your life, to look about for a place to die in, and quit the world without any one's asking after your will. The *wiseacres* will possibly, however, crowd round your coffin, and raise a monument at a considerable expense, and after a lapse of time, to commemorate your genius and your misfortunes!

The only reason why I am disposed to envy the professions of the church or army is, that men can afford to be poor in them without being subjected to insult. A girl with a handsome fortune in a country town may marry a poor lieutenant without degrading herself. An officer is always a gentleman; a clergyman is something more. Echard's book *On the Contempt of the Clergy* is unfounded. It is surely sufficient for any set of individuals, raised above actual want, that their characters are not merely respectable, but sacred. Poverty, when it is voluntary, is never despicable, but takes an heroical aspect. What are the begging friars? Have they not put their base feet upon the necks of princes? Money as a luxury is valuable only as a passport to respect. It is one instrument of power. Where there are other admitted and ostensible claims to this, it becomes superfluous, and the neglect of it is even admired and looked up to as a mark of superiority over it. Even a strolling beggar is a popular character, who makes an open profession of his craft and calling, and who is neither worth a doit nor in want of one. The Scotch are proverbially poor and proud: we know they can remedy their poverty when they set about it. No one is sorry for them. The French emigrants were formerly peculiarly situated in England. The priests were obnoxious to the common people on account of their religion; both they and the nobles, for their politics. Their poverty and dirt subjected them to many rebuffs; but their privations being voluntarily incurred, and also borne with the characteristic patience and good-humour of the nation, screened them from contempt. I little thought, when I used to meet them walking out in the summer's-evenings at Somers' Town, in their long great-coats, their beards covered with snuff, and their eyes gleaming with mingled hope and regret in the rays of the setting sun, and regarded them with pity bordering on respect, as the last filmy vestige of the ancient regime, as shadows of loyalty and superstition still flitting about the earth and shortly to disappear from it for ever, that they would one day return over the bleeding corpse of their country, and sit like harpies, a polluted triumph, over the tomb of human liberty! To be a lord, a papist, and poor, is perhaps to some temperaments a consummation devoutly to be wished. There is all the subdued splendour of external rank, the pride of self-opinion, irritated and goaded on by petty privations

and vulgar obloquy to a degree of morbid acuteness. Private and public annoyances must perpetually remind him of what he is, of what his ancestors were (a circumstance which might otherwise be forgotten); must narrow the circle of conscious dignity more and more, and the sense of personal worth and pretension must be exalted by habit and contrast into a refined abstraction—'pure in the last recesses of the mind'—unmixed with, or unalloyed by 'baser matter!'—It was an hypothesis of the late Mr. Thomas Wedgewood, that there is a principle of compensation in the human mind which equalizes all situations, and by which the absence of any thing only gives us a more intense and intimate perception of the reality; that insult adds to pride, that pain looks forward to ease with delight, that hunger already enjoys the unsavoury morsel that is to save it from perishing; that want is surrounded with imaginary riches, like the poor poet in Hogarth, who has a map of the mines of Peru hanging on his garret walls; in short, that 'we can hold a fire in our hand by thinking on the frosty Caucasus'—but this hypothesis, though ingenious and to a certain point true, is to be admitted only in a limited and qualified sense.

There are two classes of people that I have observed who are not so distinct as might be imagined—those who cannot keep their own money in their hands, and those who cannot keep their hands from other people's. The first are always in want of money, though they do not know what they do with it. They *muddle* it away, without method or object, and without having any thing to show for it. They have not, for instance, a fine house, but they hire two houses at a time; they have not a hot-house in their garden, but a shrubbery within doors; they do not gamble, but they purchase a library, and dispose of it when they move house. A princely benefactor provides them with lodgings, where, for a time, you are sure to find them at home: and they furnish them in a handsome style for those who are to come after them. With all this sieve-like economy, they can only afford a leg of mutton and a bottle of wine, and are glad to get a lift in a common stage; whereas with a little management and the same disbursements, they might entertain a round of company and drive a smart tilbury. But they set no value upon money, and throw it away on any object or in any manner that first presents itself, merely to have it off their hands, so that you wonder what has become of it. The second class above spoken of not only make away with what belongs to themselves, but you cannot keep any thing you have from their rapacious grasp. If you refuse to lend them what you want, they insist that you *must*: if you let them have any thing to take charge of for a time (a print or a bust) they swear

that you have given it them, and that they have too great a regard for the donor ever to part with it. You express surprise at their having run so largely in debt; but where is the singularity while others continue to lend? And how is this to be helped, when the manner of these sturdy beggars amounts to dragooning you out of your money, and they will not go away without your purse, any more than if they came with a pistol in their hand? If a person has no delicacy, he has you in his power, for you necessarily feel some towards him; and since he will take no denial, you must comply with his peremptory demands, or send for a constable, which out of respect for his character you will not do. These persons are also poor—*light come, light go*—and the bubble bursts at last. Yet if they had employed the same time and pains in any laudable art or study that they have in raising a surreptitious livelihood, they would have been respectable, if not rich. It is their facility in borrowing money that has ruined them. No one will set heartily to work, who has the face to enter a strange house, ask the master of it for a considerable loan, on some plausible and pompous pretext, and walk off with it in his pocket. You might as well suspect a highway-man of addicting himself to hard study in the intervals of his profession.

There is only one other class of persons I can think of, in connexion with the subject of this Essay—those who are always in want of money from the want of spirit to make use of it. Such persons are perhaps more to be pitied than all the rest. They live in want, in the midst of plenty—dare not touch what belongs to them, are afraid to say that their soul is their own, have their wealth locked up from them by fear and meanness as effectually as by bolts and bars, scarcely allow themselves a coat to their backs or a morsel to eat, are in dread of coming to the parish all their lives, and are not sorry when they die, to think that they shall no longer be an expense to themselves—according to the old epigram:

'Here lies Father Clarges,
Who died to save charges!'

## ON THE FEELING OF IMMORTALITY IN YOUTH

*The Monthly Magazine.*] [*March*, 1827.

'Life is a pure flame, and we live by an invisible sun within us.'
—Sir Thomas Brown.

No young man believes he shall ever die. It was a saying of my brother's, and a fine one. There is a feeling of Eternity in youth, which makes us amends for every thing. To be young is to be as

one of the Immortal Gods. One half of time indeed is flown—the other half remains in store for us with all its countless treasures; for there is no line drawn, and we see no limit to our hopes and wishes. We make the coming age our own.——

'The vast, the unbounded prospect lies before us.'

Death, old age, are words without a meaning, that pass by us like the idle air which we regard not. Others may have undergone, or may still be liable to them—we 'bear a charmed life,' which laughs to scorn all such sickly fancies. As in setting out on a delightful journey, we strain our eager gaze forward——

'Bidding the lovely scenes at distance hail,'—

and see no end to the landscape, new objects presenting themselves as we advance; so, in the commencement of life, we set no bounds to our inclinations, nor to the unrestricted opportunities of gratifying them. We have as yet found no obstacle, no disposition to flag; and it seems that we can go on so for ever. We look round in a new world, full of life, and motion, and ceaseless progress; and feel in ourselves all the vigour and spirit to keep pace with it, and do not foresee from any present symptoms how we shall be left behind in the natural course of things, decline into old age, and drop into the grave. It is the simplicity, and as it were *abstractedness* of our feelings in youth, that (so to speak) identifies us with nature, and (our experience being slight and our passions strong) deludes us into a belief of being immortal like it. Our short-lived connection with existence, we fondly flatter ourselves, is an indissoluble and lasting union—a honey-moon that knows neither coldness, jar, nor separation. As infants smile and sleep, we are rocked in the cradle of our wayward fancies, and lulled into security by the roar of the universe around us—we quaff the cup of life with eager haste without draining it, instead of which it only overflows the more—objects press around us, filling the mind with their magnitude and with the throng of desires that wait upon them, so that we have no room for the thoughts of death. From that plenitude of our being, we cannot change all at once to dust and ashes, we cannot imagine 'this sensible, warm motion, to become a kneaded clod'—we are too much dazzled by the brightness of the waking dream around us to look into the darkness of the tomb. We no more see our end than our beginning: the one is lost in oblivion and vacancy, as the other is hid from us by the crowd and hurry of approaching events. Or the grim shadow is seen lingering in the horizon, which we are doomed never to overtake, or whose last, faint, glimmering outline touches

upon Heaven and translates us to the skies! Nor would the hold that life has taken of us permit us to detach our thoughts from present objects and pursuits, even if we would. What is there more opposed to health, than sickness; to strength and beauty, than decay and dissolution; to the active search of knowledge than mere oblivion? Or is there none of the usual advantage to bar the approach of Death, and mock his idle threats; Hope supplies their place, and draws a veil over the abrupt termination of all our cherished schemes. While the spirit of youth remains unimpaired, ere the 'wine of life is drank up,' we are like people intoxicated or in a fever, who are hurried away by the violence of their own sensations: it is only as present objects begin to pall upon the sense, as we have been disappointed in our favourite pursuits, cut off from our closest ties, that passion loosens its hold upon the breast, that we by degrees become weaned from the world, and allow ourselves to contemplate, 'as in a glass, darkly,' the possibility of parting with it for good. The example of others, the voice of experience, has no effect upon us whatever. Casualties we must avoid: the slow and deliberate advances of age we can play at *hide-and-seek* with. We think ourselves too lusty and too nimble for that blear-eyed decrepid old gentleman to catch us. Like the foolish fat scullion, in Sterne, when she hears that Master Bobby is dead, our only reflection is—'So am not I!' The idea of death, instead of staggering our confidence, rather seems to strengthen and enhance our possession and our enjoyment of life. Others may fall around us like leaves, or be mowed down like flowers by the scythe of Time: these are but tropes and figures to the unreflecting ears and overweening presumption of youth. It is not till we see the flowers of Love, Hope, and Joy, withering around us, and our own pleasures cut up by the roots, that we bring the moral home to ourselves, that we abate something of the wanton extravagance of our pretensions, or that the emptiness and dreariness of the prospect before us reconciles us to the stillness of the grave!

> 'Life! thou strange thing, that hast a power to feel
> Thou art, and to perceive that others are.'[1]

Well might the poet begin his indignant invective against an art, whose professed object is its destruction, with this animated apostrophe to life. Life is indeed a strange gift, and its privileges are most miraculous. Nor is it singular that when the splendid boon is first granted us, our gratitude, our admiration, and our delight should prevent us from reflecting on our own nothingness, or from thinking it will ever be recalled. Our first and strongest impressions are taken

[1] Fawcett's Art of War, a poem, 1794.

from the mighty scene that is opened to us, and we very innocently transfer its durability as well as magnificence to ourselves. So newly found, we cannot make up our minds to parting with it yet and at least put off that consideration to an indefinite term. Like a clown at a fair, we are full of amazement and rapture, and have no thoughts of going home, or that it will soon be night. We know our existence only from external objects, and we measure it by them. We can never be satisfied with gazing; and nature will still want us to look on and applaud. Otherwise, the sumptuous entertainment, 'the feast of reason and the flow of soul,' to which they were invited, seems little better than a mockery and a cruel insult. We do not go from a play till the scene is ended, and the lights are ready to be extinguished. But the fair face of things still shines on; shall we be called away, before the curtain falls, or ere we have scarce had a glimpse of what is going on? Like children, our step-mother Nature holds us up to see the raree-show of the universe; and then, as if life were a burthen to support, lets us instantly down again. Yet in that short interval, what 'brave sublunary things' does not the spectacle unfold; like a bubble, at one minute reflecting the universe, and the next, shook to air!—To see the golden sun and the azure sky, the outstretched ocean, to walk upon the green earth, and to be lord of a thousand creatures, to look down giddy precipices or over distant flowery vales, to see the world spread out under one's finger in a map, to bring the stars near, to view the smallest insects in a microscope, to read history, and witness the revolutions of empires and the succession of generations, to hear of the glory of Sidon and Tyre, of Babylon and Susa, as of a faded pageant, and to say all these were, and are now nothing, to think that we exist in such a point of time, and in such a corner of space, to be at once spectators and a part of the moving scene, to watch the return of the seasons, of spring and autumn, to hear

> ——'The stockdove plain amid the forest deep,
> That drowsy rustles to the sighing gale'——

to traverse desert wildernesses, to listen to the midnight choir, to visit lighted halls, or plunge into the dungeon's gloom, or sit in crowded theatres and see life itself mocked, to feel heat and cold, pleasure and pain, right and wrong, truth and falsehood, to study the works of art and refine the sense of beauty to agony, to worship fame and to dream of immortality, to have read Shakspeare and belong to the same species as Sir Isaac Newton;[1] to be and to do all this, and then in a

[1] Lady Wortley Montague says, in one of her letters, that 'she would much rather be a rich *effendi*, with all his ignorance, than Sir Isaac Newton, with all his

moment to be nothing, to have it all snatched from one like a juggler's ball or a phantasmagoria; there is something revolting and incredible to sense in the transition, and no wonder that, aided by youth and warm blood, and the flush of enthusiasm, the mind contrives for a long time to reject it with disdain and loathing as a monstrous and improbable fiction, like a monkey on a house-top, that is loath, amidst its fine discoveries and specious antics, to be tumbled head-long into the street, and crushed to atoms, the sport and laughter of the multitude!

The change, from the commencement to the close of life, appears like a fable, after it has taken place; how should we treat it otherwise than as a chimera before it has come to pass? There are some things that happened so long ago, places or persons we have formerly

knowledge.' This was not perhaps an impolitic choice, as she had a better chance of becoming one than the other, there being many rich effendis to one Sir Isaac Newton. The wish was not a very intellectual one. The same petulance of rank and sex breaks out every where in these "*Letters.*" She is constantly reducing the poets or philosophers who have the misfortune of her acquaintance, to the figure they might make at her Ladyship's levee or toilette, not considering that the public mind does not sympathize with this process of a fastidious imagination. In the same spirit, she declares of Pope and Swift, that 'had it not been for the *good-nature* of mankind, these two superior beings were entitled, by their birth and hereditary fortune, to be only a couple of link-boys.' Gulliver's Travels, and the Rape of the Lock, go for nothing in this critical estimate, and the world raised the authors to the rank of superior beings, in spite of their disadvantages of birth and fortune, *out of pure good-nature!* So, again, she says of Richardson, that he had never got beyond the servants' hall, and was utterly unfit to describe the manners of people of quality; till in the capricious workings of her vanity, she persuades herself that Clarissa is very like what she was at her age, and that Sir Thomas and Lady Grandison strongly resembled what she had heard of her mother and remembered of her father. It is one of the beauties and advantages of literature, that it is the means of abstracting the mind from the narrowness of local and personal prejudices, and of enabling us to judge of truth and excellence by their inherent merits alone. Woe be to the pen that would undo this fine illusion (the only reality), and teach us to regulate our notions of genius and virtue by the circumstances in which they happen to be placed! You would not expect a person whom you saw in a servants' hall, or behind a counter, to write Clarissa; but after he had written the work, to *pre-judge* it from the situation of the writer, is an unpardonable piece of injustice and folly. His merit could only be the greater from the contrast. If literature is an elegant accomplishment, which none but persons of birth and fashion should be allowed to excel in, or to exercise with advantage to the public, let them by all means take upon them the task of enlightening and refining mankind: if they decline this responsibility as too heavy for their shoulders, let those who do the drudgery in their stead, however inadequately, for want of their polite example, receive the meed that is their due, and not be treated as low pretenders who have encroached on the province of their betters. Suppose Richardson to have been acquainted with the great man's steward, or valet, instead of the great man himself, I will venture to say that there was more difference between him who lived in an *ideal world*, and had the genius and felicity to open that world to others, and his friend the steward, than between the

seen, of which such dim traces remain, we hardly know whether it was sleeping or waking they occurred; they are like dreams within the dream of life, a mist, a film before the eye of memory, which, as we try to recall them more distinctly, elude our notice altogether. It is but natural that the lone interval that we thus look back upon, should have appeared long and endless in prospect. There are others so distinct and fresh, they seem but of yesterday—their very vividness might be deemed a pledge of their permanence. Then, however far back our impressions may go, we find others still older (for our years are multiplied in youth); descriptions of scenes that we had read, and people before our time, Priam and the Trojan war; and even then, Nestor was old and dwelt delighted on his youth, and

lacquey and the mere lord, or between those who lived in different rooms of the same house, who dined on the same luxuries at different tables, who rode outside or inside of the same coach, and were proud of wearing or of bestowing the same tawdry livery. If the lord is distinguished from his valet by any thing else, it is by education and talent, which he has in common with our author. But if the latter shews these in the highest degree, it is asked what are his pretensions? Not birth or fortune, for neither of these would enable him to write a Clarissa. One man is born with a title and estate, another with genius. That is sufficient; and we have no right to question the genius for want of the *gentility*, unless the former ran in families, or could be bequeathed with a fortune, which is not the case. Were it so, the flowers of literature, like jewels and embroidery, would be confined to the fashionable circles; and there would be no pretenders to taste or elegance but those whose names were found in the court list. No one objects to Claude's Landscapes as the work of a pastrycook, or withholds from Raphael the epithet of *divine*, because his parents were not rich. This impertinence is confined to men of letters; the evidence of the senses baffles the envy and foppery of mankind. No quarter ought to be given to this *aristocratic* tone of criticism whenever it appears. People of quality are not contented with carrying all the external advantages for their own share, but would persuade you that all the intellectual ones are packed up in the same bundle. Lord Byron was a later instance of this double and unwarrantable style of pretension—*monstrum ingens, biforme.* He could not endure a lord who was not a wit, nor a poet who was not a lord. Nobody but himself answered to his own standard of perfection. Mr. Moore carries a proxy in his pocket from some noble persons to estimate literary merit by the same rule. Lady Mary calls Fielding names, but she afterwards makes atonement by doing justice to his frank, free, hearty nature, where she says 'his spirits gave him raptures with his cook-maid, and cheerfulness when he was starving in a garret, and his happy constitution made him forget every thing when he was placed before a venison-pasty or over a flask of champagne.' She does not want shrewdness and spirit when her petulance and conceit do not get the better of her, and she has done ample and merited execution on Lord Bolingbroke. She is, however, very angry at the freedoms taken with the Great; *smells a rat* in this indiscriminate scribbling, and the familiarity of writers with the reading public; and inspired by her Turkish costume, foretells a French or English revolution as the consequence of transferring the patronage of letters from the *quality* to the mob, and of supposing that ordinary writers or readers can have any notions in common with their superiors.

spoke of the race, of heroes that were no more;—what wonder that, seeing this long line of being pictured in our minds, and reviving as it were in us, we should give ourselves involuntary credit for an indeterminate period of existence? In the Cathedral at Peterborough there is a monument to Mary, Queen of Scots, at which I used to gaze when a boy, while the events of the period, all that had happened since, passed in review before me. If all this mass of feeling and imagination could be crowded into a moment's compass, what might not the whole of life be supposed to contain? We are heirs of the past; we count upon the future as our natural reversion. Besides, there are some of our early impressions so exquisitely tempered, it appears that they must always last—nothing can add to or take away from their sweetness and purity—the first breath of spring, the hyacinth dipped in the dew, the mild lustre of the evening-star, the rainbow after a storm—while we have the full enjoyment of these, we must be young; and what can ever alter us in this respect? Truth, friendship, love, books, are also proof against the canker of time; and while we live, but for them, we can never grow old. We take out a new lease of existence from the objects on which we set our affections, and become abstracted, impassive, immortal in them. We cannot conceive how certain sentiments should ever decay or grow cold in our breasts; and, consequently, to maintain them in their first youthful glow and vigour, the flame of life must continue to burn as bright as ever, or rather, they are the fuel that feed the sacred lamp, that kindle 'the purple light of love,' and spread a golden cloud around our heads! Again, we not only flourish and survive in our affections (in which we will not listen to the possibility of a change, any more than we foresee the wrinkles on the brow of a mistress), but we have a farther guarantee against the thoughts of death in our favourite studies and pursuits, and in their continual advance. Art we know is long; life, we feel, should be so too. We see no end of the difficulties we have to encounter: perfection is slow of attainment, and we must have time to accomplish it in. Rubens complained that when he had just learnt his art, he was snatched away from it: we trust we shall be more fortunate! A wrinkle in an old head takes whole days to finish it properly: but to catch 'the Raphael grace, the Guido air,' no limit should be put to our endeavours. What a prospect for the future! What a task we have entered upon! and shall we be arrested in the middle of it? We do not reckon our time thus employed lost, or our pains thrown away, or our progress slow—we do not droop or grow tired, but 'gain new vigour at our endless task;'—and shall Time grudge us the opportunity to finish what we have auspiciously begun, and have formed a sort of compact

with nature to achieve? The fame of the great names we look up to is also imperishable; and shall not we, who contemplate it with such intense yearnings, imbibe a portion of ethereal fire, the *divinæ particula auræ*, which nothing can extinguish? I remember to have looked at a print of Rembrandt for hours together, without being conscious of the flight of time, trying to resolve it into its component parts, to connect its strong and sharp gradations, to learn the secret of its reflected lights, and found neither satiety nor pause in the prosecution of my studies. The print over which I was poring would last long enough; why should the idea in my mind, which was finer, more impalpable, perish before it? At this, I redoubled the ardour of my pursuit, and by the very subtlety and refinement of my inquiries, seemed to bespeak for them an exemption from corruption and the rude grasp of Death.[1]

Objects, on our first acquaintance with them, have that singleness and integrity of impression that it seems as if nothing could destroy or obliterate them, so firmly are they stamped and rivetted on the brain. We repose on them with a sort of voluptuous indolence, in full faith and boundless confidence. We are absorbed in the present moment, or return to the same point—idling away a great deal of time in youth, thinking we have enough and to spare. There is often a local feeling in the air, which is as fixed as if it were of marble; we loiter in dim cloisters, losing ourselves in thought and in their glimmering arches; a winding road before us seems as long as the journey of life, and as full of events. Time and experience dissipate this illusion; and by reducing them to detail, circumscribe the limits of our expectations. It is only as the pageant of life passes by and the masques turn their backs upon us, that we see through the deception, or believe that the train will have an end. In many cases, the slow progress and monotonous texture of our lives, before we mingle with the world and are embroiled in its affairs, has a tendency to aid the same feeling. We have a difficulty, when left to ourselves, and without the resource of books or some more lively pursuit, to 'beguile the slow and creeping hours of time,' and argue that if it moves on always at this tedious snail's-pace, it can never come to an end. We are willing to skip over certain portions of it that separate us from favourite objects, that irritate ourselves at the unnecessary delay. The young are prodigal of life from a superabundance of it; the old are tenacious on the same score, because they have little left, and cannot enjoy even what remains of it.

For my part, I set out in life with the French Revolution, and

[1] Is it not this that frequently keeps artists alive so long, *viz.* the constant occupation of their minds with vivid images, with little of the *wear-and-tear* of the body?

that event had considerable influence on my early feelings, as on those of others. Youth was then doubly such. It was the dawn of a new era, a new impulse had been given to men's minds, and the sun of Liberty rose upon the sun of Life in the same day, and both were proud to run their race together. Little did I dream, while my first hopes and wishes went hand in hand with those of the human race, that long before my eyes should close, that dawn would be overcast, and set once more in the night of despotism—'total eclipse!' Happy that I did not. I felt for years, and during the best part of my existence, *heart-whole* in that cause, and triumphed in the triumphs over the enemies of man! At that time, while the fairest aspirations of the human mind seemed about to be realized, ere the image of man was defaced and his breast mangled in scorn, philosophy took a higher, poetry could afford a deeper range. At that time, to read the 'Robbers,' was indeed delicious, and to hear

> 'From the dungeon of the tower time-rent,
> That fearful voice, a famish'd father's cry,'

could be borne only amidst the fulness of hope, the crash of the fall of the strong holds of power, and the exulting sounds of the march of human freedom. What feelings the death-scene in Don Carlos sent into the soul! In that headlong career of lofty enthusiasm, and the joyous opening of the prospects of the world and our own, the thought of death crossing it, smote doubly cold upon the mind; there was a stifling sense of oppression and confinement, an impatience of our present knowledge, a desire to grasp the whole of our existence in one strong embrace, to sound the mystery of life and death, and in order to put an end to the agony of doubt and dread, to burst through our prison-house, and confront the King of Terrors in his grisly palace! . . . As I was writing out this passage, my miniature-picture when a child lay on the mantle-piece, and I took it out of the case to look at it. I could perceive few traces of myself in it; but there was the same placid brow, the dimpled mouth, the same timid, inquisitive glance as ever. But its careless smile did not seem to reproach me with having become a recreant to the sentiments that were then sown in my mind, or with having written a sentence that could call up a blush in this image of ingenuous youth!

'That time is past with all its giddy raptures.' Since the future was barred to my progress, I have turned for consolation to the past, gathering up the fragments of my early recollections, and putting them into a form that might live. It is thus, that when we find our personal and substantial identity vanishing from us, we strive to gain a reflected and substituted one in our thoughts: we do not like to

perish wholly, and wish to bequeath our names at least to posterity. As long as we can keep alive our cherished thoughts and nearest interests in the minds of others, we do not appear to have retired altogether from the stage, we still occupy a place in the estimation of mankind, exercise a powerful influence over them, and it is only our bodies that are trampled into dust or dispersed to air. Our darling speculations still find favour and encouragement, and we make as good a figure in the eyes of our descendants, nay, perhaps, a better than we did in our life-time. This is one point gained; the demands of our self-love are so far satisfied. Besides, if by the proofs of intellectual superiority we survive ourselves in this world, by exemplary virtue or unblemished faith, we are taught to ensure an interest in another and a higher state of being, and to anticipate at the same time the applauses of men and angels.

'Even from the tomb the voice of nature cries;
Even in our ashes live their wonted fires.'

As we advance in life, we acquire a keener sense of the value of time. Nothing else, indeed, seems of any consequence; and we become misers in this respect. We try to arrest its few last tottering steps, and to make it linger on the brink of the grave. We can never leave off wondering how that which has ever been should cease to be, and would still live on, that we may wonder at our own shadow, and when 'all the life of life is flown,' dwell on the retrospect of the past. This is accompanied by a mechanical tenaciousness of whatever we possess, by a distrust and a sense of fallacious hollowness in all we see. Instead of the full, pulpy feeling of youth, every thing is flat and insipid. The world is a painted witch, that puts us off with false shews and tempting appearances. The ease, the jocund gaiety, the unsuspecting security of youth are fled: nor can we, without flying in the face of common sense,

'From the last dregs of life, hope to receive
What its first sprightly runnings could not give.'

If we can slip out of the world without notice or mischance, can tamper with bodily infirmity, and frame our minds to the becoming composure of *still-life*, before we sink into total insensibility, it is as much as we ought to expect. We do not in the regular course of nature die all at once: we have mouldered away gradually long before; faculty after faculty, attachment after attachment, we are torn from ourselves piece-meal while living; year after year takes something from us; and death only consigns the last remnant of what we were to the grave. The revulsion is not so great, and a quiet

*euthanasia* is a winding-up of the plot, that is not out of reason or nature.

That we should thus in a manner outlive ourselves, and dwindle imperceptibly into nothing, is not surprising, when even in our prime the strongest impressions leave so little traces of themselves behind, and the last object is driven out by the succeeding one. How little effect is produced on us at any time by the books we have read, the scenes we have witnessed, the sufferings we have gone through! Think only of the variety of feelings we experience in reading an interesting romance, or being present at a fine play—what beauty, what sublimity, what soothing, what heart-rending emotions! You would suppose these would last for ever, or at least subdue the mind to a correspondent tone and harmony—while we turn over the page, while the scene is passing before us, it seems as if nothing could ever after shake our resolution, that 'treason domestic, foreign levy, nothing could touch us farther!' The first splash of mud we get, on entering the street, the first pettifogging shop-keeper that cheats us out of two-pence, and the whole vanishes clean out of our remembrance, and we become the idle prey of the most petty and annoying circumstances. The mind soars by an effort to the grand and lofty: it is at home, in the grovelling, the disagreeable, and the little. This happens in the height and hey-day of our existence, when novelty gives a stronger impulse to the blood and takes a faster hold of the brain, (I have known the impression on coming out of a gallery of pictures then last half a day)—as we grow old, we become more feeble and querulous, every object 'reverbs its own hollowness,' and both worlds are not enough to satisfy the peevish importunity and extravagant presumption of our desires! There are a few superior, happy beings, who are born with a temper exempt from every trifling annoyance. This spirit sits serene and smiling as in its native skies, and a divine harmony (whether heard or not) plays around them. This is to be at peace. Without this, it is in vain to fly into deserts, or to build a hermitage on the top of rocks, if regret and ill-humour follow us there: and with this, it is needless to make the experiment. The only true retirement is that of the heart; the only true leisure is the repose of the passions. To such persons it makes little difference whether they are young or old; and they die as they have lived, with graceful resignation.

# ON READING NEW BOOKS

*The Monthly Magazine.*] [*July*, 1827.

'And what of this new book, that the whole world make such a rout about?'—STERNE.

I CANNOT understand the rage manifested by the greater part of the world for reading New Books. If the public had read all those that have gone before, I can conceive how they should not wish to read the same work twice over; but when I consider the countless volumes that lie unopened, unregarded, unread, and unthought-of, I cannot enter into the pathetic complaints that I hear made, that Sir Walter writes no more—that the press is idle—that Lord Byron is dead. If I have not read a book before, it is, to all intents and purposes, new to me, whether it was printed yesterday or three hundred years ago. If it be urged that it has no modern, passing incidents, and is out of date and old-fashioned, then it is so much the newer; it is farther removed from other works that I have lately read, from the familiar routine of ordinary life, and makes so much more addition to my knowledge. But many people would as soon think of putting on old armour, as of taking up a book not published within the last month, or year at the utmost. There is a fashion in reading as well as in dress, which lasts only for the season. One would imagine that books were, like women, the worse for being old;[1] that they have a pleasure in being read for the first time; that they open their leaves more cordially; that the spirit of enjoyment wears out with the spirit of novelty; and that, after a certain age, it is high time to put them on the shelf. This conceit seems to be followed up in practice. What is it to me that another—that hundreds or thousands have in all ages read a work? Is it on this account the less likely to give me pleasure, because it has delighted so many others? Or can I taste this pleasure by proxy? Or am I in any degree the wiser for their knowledge? Yet this might appear to be the inference. *Their* having read the work may be said to act upon us by sympathy, and the knowledge which so many other persons have of its contents deadens our curiosity and interest altogether. We set aside the subject as one on which others have made up their minds for us (as if we really could have ideas in their heads), and are quite on the alert for the next new work, teeming hot from the press, which we shall be the first to read, criticise, and pass an opinion on. Oh,

[1] 'Laws are not like women, the worse for being old.'—*The Duke of Buckingham's Speech in the House of Lords, in Charles the Second's time.*

delightful! To cut open the leaves, to inhale the fragrance of the scarcely dry paper, to examine the type, to see who is the printer (which is some clue to the value that is set upon the work), to launch out into regions of thought and invention never trod till now, and to explore characters that never met a human eye before—this is a luxury worth sacrificing a dinner-party, or a few hours of a spare morning to. Who, indeed, when the work is critical and full of expectation, would venture to dine out, or to face a coterie of blue-stockings in the evening, without having gone through this ordeal, or at least without hastily turning over a few of the first pages, while dressing, to be able to say that the beginning does not promise much, or to tell the name of the heroine?

A new work is something in our power: we mount the bench, and sit in judgment on it: we can damn or recommend it to others at pleasure, can decry or extol it to the skies, and can give an answer to those who have not yet read it and expect an account of it; and thus shew our shrewdness and the independence of our taste before the world have had time to form an opinion. If we cannot write ourselves, we become, by busying ourselves about it, a kind of *accessaries after the fact*. Though not the parent of the bantling that 'has just come into this breathing world, scarce half made up,' without the aid of criticism and puffing, yet we are the gossips and foster-nurses on the occasion, with all the mysterious significance and self-importance of the tribe. If we wait, we must take our report from others; if we make haste, we may dictate our's to them. It is not a race, then, for priority of information, but for precedence in tattling and dogmatising. The work last out is the first that people talk and inquire about. It is the subject on the *tapis*—the cause that is pending. It is the last candidate for success (other claims have been disposed of), and appeals for this success to us, and us alone. Our predecessors can have nothing to say to this question, however they may have anticipated us on others; future ages, in all probability, will not trouble their heads about it; we are the panel. How hard, then, not to avail ourselves of our immediate privilege to give sentence of life or death—to seem in ignorance of what every one else is full of—to be behind-hand with the polite, the knowing, and fashionable part of mankind—to be at a loss and dumb-founded, when all around us are in their glory, and figuring away, on no other ground than that of having read a work that we have not! Books that are to be written hereafter cannot be criticised by us; those that were written formerly have been criticised long ago: but a new book is the property, the prey of ephemeral criticism, which it darts triumphantly upon; there is a raw thin air of ignorance and uncertainty about it,

not filled up by any recorded opinion; and curiosity, impertinence, and vanity rush eagerly into the vacuum. A new book is the fair field for petulance and coxcombry to gather laurels in—the but set up for roving opinion to aim at. Can we wonder, then, that the circulating libraries are beseiged by literary dowagers and their granddaughters, when a new novel is announced? That Mail-Coach copies of the Edinburgh Review are or were coveted? That the Manuscript of the Waverley romances is sent abroad in time for the French, German, or even Italian translation to appear on the same day as the original work, so that the longing Continental public may not be kept waiting an instant longer than their fellow-readers in the English metropolis, which would be as tantalising and insupportable as a little girl being kept without her new frock, when her sister's is just come home and is the talk and admiration of every one in the house? To be sure, there is something in the taste of the times; a modern work is expressly adapted to modern readers. It appeals to our direct experience, and to well-known subjects; it is part and parcel of the world around us, and is drawn from the same sources as our daily thoughts. There is, therefore, so far, a natural or habitual sympathy between us and the literature of the day, though this is a different consideration from the mere circumstance of novelty. An author now alive has a right to calculate upon the living public: he cannot count upon the dead, nor look forward with much confidence to those that are unborn. Neither, however, is it true that we are eager to read all new books alike: we turn from them with a certain feeling of distaste and distrust, unless they are recommended to us by some peculiar feature or obvious distinction. Only young ladies from the boarding-school, or milliners' girls, read all the new novels that come out. It must be spoken of or against; the writer's name must be well known or a great secret; it must be a topic of discourse and a mark for criticism—that is, it must be likely to bring us into notice in some way—or we take no notice of it. There is a mutual and tacit understanding on this head. We can no more read all the new books that appear, than we can read all the old ones that have disappeared from time to time. A question may be started here, and pursued as far as needful, whether, if an old and worm-eaten Manuscript were discovered at the present moment, it would be sought after with the same avidity as a new and hot-pressed poem, or other popular work? Not generally, certainly, though by a few with perhaps greater zeal. For it would not affect present interests, or amuse present fancies, or touch on present manners, or fall in with the public *egotism* in any way: it would be the work either of some obscure author—in which case it would want the principle of excitement; or

of some illustrious name, whose style and manner would be already familiar to those most versed in the subject, and his fame established —so that, as a matter of comment and controversy, it would only go to account on the old score: there would be no room for learned feuds and heart-burnings. Was there not a Manuscript of Cicero's talked of as having been discovered about a year ago? But we have heard no more of it. There have been several other cases, more or less in point, in our time or near it. A Noble Lord (which may serve to shew at least the interest taken in books *not for being new*) some time ago gave 2000*l.* for a copy of the first edition of the Decameron: but did he read it? It has been a fashion also of late for noble and wealthy persons to go to a considerable expense in ordering reprints of the old Chronicles and black-letter works. Does not this rather prove that the books did not circulate very rapidly or extensively, or such extraordinary patronage and liberality would not have been necessary? Mr. Thomas Taylor, at the instance, I believe, of the old Duke of Norfolk, printed fifty copies in quarto of a translation of the works of Plato and Aristotle. He did not choose that a larger impression should be struck off, lest these authors should get into the hands of the vulgar. There was no danger of a run in that way. I tried to read some of the Dialogues in the translation of Plato, but, I confess, could make nothing of it: 'the logic was so different from ours!'[1] A startling experiment was made on this sort of retrospective curiosity, in the case of Ireland's celebrated Shakspeare forgery. The public there certainly manfested no backwardness nor lukewarmness: the enthusiasm was equal to the folly. But then the spirit exhibited on this occasion was partly critical and polemical, and it is a problem whether an actual and undoubted play of Shakspeare's would have excited the same ferment; and, on the other hand, Shakspeare is an essential modern. People read and go to see his real plays, as well as his pretended ones. The *fuss* made

[1] An expression borrowed from a voluble German scholar, who gave this as an excuse for not translating the 'Critique of Pure Reason' into English. He might as well have said seriously, that the *Rule of Three* in German was different from our's. Mr. Taylor (the Platonist, as he was called) was a singular instance of a person in our time believing in the heathen mythology. He had a very beautiful wife. An impudent Frenchman, who came over to London, and lodged in the same house, made love to her, by pretending to worship her as Venus, and so thought to turn the tables on our philosopher. I once spent an evening with this gentleman at Mr. G. D.'s chambers, in Clifford's-inn, (where there was no exclusion of persons or opinions), and where we had pipes and tobacco, porter, and bread and cheese for supper. Mr. Taylor never smoked, never drank porter, and had an aversion to cheese. I remember he shewed with some triumph two of his fingers, which had been bent so that he had lost the use of them, in copying out the manuscripts of Proclus and Plotinus in a fine Greek hand. Such are the trophies of

about Ossian is another test to refer to. It was its being the supposed revival of an old work (known only by scattered fragments or lingering tradition) which gave it its chief interest, though there was also a good deal of mystery and quackery concerned along with the din and stir of national jealousy and pretension. Who reads Ossian now? It is one of the reproaches brought against Buonaparte that he was fond of it when young. I cannot for myself see the objection. There is no doubt an antiquarian spirit always at work, and opposed to the spirit of novelty-hunting; but, though opposed, it is scarcely a match for it in a general and popular point of view. It is not long ago that I happened to be suggesting a new translation of Don Quixote to an enterprising bookseller; and his answer was,—'We want new Don Quixotes.' I believe I deprived the same active-minded person of a night's rest, by telling him there was the beginning of another novel by Goldsmith in existence. This, if it could be procured, would satisfy both tastes for the new and the old at once. I fear it is but a fragment, and that we must wait till a new Goldsmith appears. We may observe of late a strong craving after *Memoirs* and *Lives of the Dead*. But these, it may be remarked, savour so much of the real and familiar, that the persons described differ from us only in being dead, which is a reflection to our advantage: or, if remote and romantic in their interest and adventures, they require to be bolstered up in some measure by the embellishments of modern style and criticism. The accounts of Petrarch and Laura, of Abelard and Eloise, have a lusciousness and warmth in the subject which contrast quaintly and pointedly with the coldness of the grave; and, after all, we prefer Pope's Eloise and Abelard with the modern dress and flourishes, to the sublime and affecting simplicity of the original Letters.

In some very just and agreeable reflections on the story of Abelard

human pride! It would be well if our deep studies often produced no other crookedness and deformity! I endeavoured (but in vain) to learn something from the heathen philosopher as to Plato's doctrine of abstract ideas being the foundation of particular ones, which I suspect has more truth in it than we moderns are willing to admit. Another friend of mine once breakfasted with Mr. D. (the most amiable and absent of hosts), when there was no butter, no knife to cut the loaf with, and the tea-pot was without a spout. My friend after a few immaterial ceremonies, adjourned to Peel's coffee-house, close by, where he regaled himself on buttered toast, coffee, and the newspaper of the day (a newspaper possessed some interest when we were young); and the only interruption to his satisfaction was the fear that his host might suddenly enter, and be shocked at his imperfect hospitality. He would probably forget the circumstance altogether. I am afraid this veteran of the old school has not received many proofs of the *archaism* of the prevailing taste; and that the corrections in his History of the University of Cambridge, have cost him more than the public will ever repay him for.

and Eloise, in a late number of a contemporary publication, there is a quotation of some lines from Lucan, which Eloise is said to have repeated in broken accents as she was advancing to the altar to receive the veil:

> 'O maxime conjux!
> O thalamis indigne meis! Hoc juris habebat
> In tantum fortuna caput? Cur impia nupsi,
> Si miserum factura fui? Nunc accipe pœnas,
> Sed quas sponte luam.' *Pharsalia*, lib. 8.

This speech, quoted by another person, on such an occasion, might seem cold and pedantic; but from the mouth of the passionate and unaffected Eloise it cannot bear that interpretation. What sounding lines! What a pomp, and yet what a familiar boldness in their application—'proud as when blue Iris bends!' The reading this account brought forcibly to mind what has struck me often before—the unreasonableness of the complaint we constantly hear of the ignorance and barbarism of former ages, and the folly of restricting all refinement and literary elegance to our own. We are indeed, indebted to the ages that have gone before us, and could not well do without them. But in all ages there will be found still others that have gone before with nearly equal lustre and advantage, though by distance and the intervention of multiplied excellence, this lustre may be dimmed or forgotten. Had it then no existence? We might, with the same reason, suppose that the horizon is the last boundary and verge of the round earth. Still, as we advance, it recedes from us; and so time from its store-house pours out an endless succession of the productions of art and genius; and the farther we explore the obscurity, other trophies and other land-marks rise up. It is only our ignorance that fixes a limit—as the mist gathered round the mountain's brow makes us fancy we are treading the edge of the universe! Here was Heloise living at a period when monkish indolence and superstition were at their height—in one of those that are emphatically called the *dark ages*; and yet, as she is led to the altar to make her last fatal vow, expressing her feelings in language quite natural to her, but from which the most accomplished and heroic of our modern females would shrink back with pretty and affected wonder and affright. The glowing and impetuous lines which she murmured, as she passed on, with spontaneous and rising enthusiasm, were engraven on her heart, familiar to her as her daily thoughts; her mind must have been full of them to overflowing, and at the same time enriched with other stores and sources of knowledge equally elegant and impressive; and we persist, notwithstanding this and a thousand similar circumstances,

in indulging our surprise how people could exist, and see, and feel, in those days, without having access to our opportunities and acquirements, and how Shakspeare wrote long after, *in a barbarous age*! The mystery in this case is of our own making. We are struck with astonishment at finding a fine moral sentiment or a noble image nervously expressed in an author of the age of Queen Elizabeth; not considering that, independently of nature and feeling, which are the same in all periods, the writers of that day, who were generally men of education and learning, had such models before them as the one that has been just referred to—were thoroughly acquainted with those masters of classic thought and language, compared with whom, in all that relates to the artificial graces of composition, the most studied of the moderns are little better than Goths and Vandals. It is true, we have lost sight of, and neglected the former, because the latter have, in a great degree, superseded them, as the elevations nearest to us intercept those farthest off; but our not availing ourselves of this vantage-ground is no reason why our forefathers should not (who had not our superfluity of choice), and most assuredly they did study and cherish the precious fragments of antiquity, collected together in their time, 'like sunken wreck and sumless treasuries;' and while they did this, we need be at no loss to account for any examples of grace, of force, or dignity in their writings, if these must always be traced back to a previous source. One age cannot understand how another could subsist without its lights, as one country thinks every other must be poor for want of its physical productions. This is a narrow and superficial view of the subject: we should by all means rise above it. I am not for devoting the whole of our time to the study of the classics, or of any other set of writers, to the exclusion and neglect of nature; but I think we should turn our thoughts enough that way to convince us of the existence of genius and learning before our time, and to cure us of an overweening conceit of ourselves, and of a contemptuous opinion of the world at large. Every civilised age and country (and of these there is not one, but a hundred) has its literature, its arts, its comforts, large and ample, though we may know nothing of them; nor is it (except for our own sakes) important that we should.

Books have been so multiplied in our days (like the Vanity Fair of knowledge), and we have made such progress beyond ourselves in some points, that it seems at first glance as if we had monopolised every possible advantage, and the rest of the world must be left destitute and in darkness. This is the *cockneyism* (with leave be it spoken) of the nineteenth century. There is a tone of smartness and piquancy in modern writing, to which former examples may, in one

sense, appear flat and pedantic. Our allusions are more pointed and personal: the ancients are, in this respect, formal and prosaic personages. Some one, not long ago, in this vulgar, shallow spirit of criticism (which sees every thing from its own point of view), said that the tragedies of Sophocles and Æschylus were about as good as the pieces brought out at Sadler's Wells or the Adelphi Theatre. An oration of Demosthenes is thought dry and meagre, because it is not 'full of wise saws and modern instances:' one of Cicero's is objected to as flimsy and extravagant, for the same reason. There is a style in one age which does not fall in with the taste of the public in another, as it requires greater effeminacy and softness, greater severity or simplicity, greater force or refinement. Guido was more admired than Raphael in his day, because the manners were grown softer without the strength: Sir Peter Lely was thought in his to have eclipsed Vandyke—an opinion that no one holds at present: Holbein's faces must be allowed to be very different from Sir Thomas Lawrence's—yet the one was the favourite painter of Henry VIII., as the other is of George IV. What should we say in our time to the *euphuism* of the age of Elizabeth, when style was made a riddle, and the court talked in conundrums? This, as a novelty and a trial of the wits, might take for a while: afterwards, it could only seem absurd. We must always make some allowance for a change of style, which those who are accustomed to read none but works written within the last twenty years neither can nor will make. When a whole generation read, they will read none but contemporary productions. The taste for literature becomes superficial, as it becomes universal and is spread over a larger space. When ten thousand boarding-school girls, who have learnt to play on the harpsichord, are brought out in the same season, Rossini will be preferred to Mozart, as the last new composer. I remember a very genteel young couple in the boxes at Drury Lane being very much scandalised some years ago at the phrase in *A New Way to Pay Old Debts*—'an insolent piece of paper'—applied to the contents of a letter—it wanted the modern lightness and indifference. Let an old book be ever so good, it treats (generally speaking) of topics that are stale in a style that has grown 'somewhat musty;' of manners that are exploded, probably by the very ridicule thus cast upon them; of persons that no longer figure on the stage; and of interests that have long since given place to others in the infinite fluctuations of human affairs. Longinus complains of the want of interest in the Odyssey, because it does not, like the Iliad, treat of war. The very complaint we make against the latter is that it treats of nothing else; or that, as Fuseli expresses it, every thing is seen 'through the blaze of war.'

Books of devotion are no longer read (if we read Irving's *Orations*, it is merely that we may go as a *lounge* to see the man): even attacks on religion are out of date and insipid. Voltaire's jests, and the *Jew's Letters* in answer (equal in wit, and more than equal in learning), repose quietly on the shelf together. We want something in England about Rent and the Poor-Laws, and something in France about the Charter—or Lord Byron. With the attempts, however, to revive superstition and intolerance, a spirit of opposition has been excited, and Pascall's *Provincial Letters* have been once more enlisted into the service. In France you meet with no one who has read the *New Heloise*: the *Princess of Cleves* is not even mentioned in these degenerate days. Is it not provoking with us to see the *Beggar's Opera* cut down to two acts, because some of the allusions are too broad, and others not understood? And in America—that Van Diemen's Land of letters—this sterling satire is hooted off the stage, because fortunately they have no such state of manners as it describes before their eyes; and because, unfortunately, they have no conception of any thing but what they see. America is singularly and awkwardly situated in this respect. It is a new country with an old language; and while every thing about them is of a day's growth, they are constantly applying to us to know what to think of it, and taking their opinions from our books and newspapers with a strange mixture of servility and of the spirit of contradiction. They are an independent state in politics: in literature they are still a colony from us—not out of their leading strings, and strangely puzzled how to determine between the Edinburgh and Quarterly Reviews. We have naturalised some of their writers, who had formed themselves upon us. This is at once a compliment to them and to ourselves. Amidst the scramble and lottery for fame in the present day, besides puffing, which may be regarded as the hot-bed of reputation, another mode has been attempted by *transplanting* it; and writers who are set down as drivellers at home, shoot up great authors on the other side of the water; pack up their all—a title-page and sufficient impudence; and a work, of which the *flocci-nauci-nihili-pili-fication*, in Shenstone's phrase, is well known to every competent judge, is *placarded* into eminence, and 'flames in the forehead of the morning sky' on the walls of Paris or St. Petersburgh. I dare not mention the instances, but so it is. Some reputations last only while the possessors live, from which one might suppose that they gave themselves a character for genius: others are cried up by their gossiping acquaintances, as long as they give dinners, and make their houses places of polite resort; and, in general, in our time, a book may be considered to have passed the ordeal that is mentioned at all three months after it is printed. Immortality is not even a dream—

a boy's conceit; and posthumous fame is no more regarded by the author than by his bookseller.[1]

This idle, dissipated turn seems to be a set-off to, or the obvious reaction of, the exclusive admiration of the ancients, which was formerly the fashion: as if the sun of human intellect rose and set at Rome and Athens, and the mind of man had never exerted itself to any purpose since. The ignorant, as well as the adept, were charmed only with what was obsolete and far-fetched, wrapped up in technical terms and in a learned tongue. Those who spoke and wrote a language which hardly any one at present even understood, must of course be wiser than we. Time, that brings so many reputations to decay, had embalmed others and rendered them sacred. From an implicit faith and overstrained homage paid to antiquity, we of the modern school have taken too strong a bias to what is new; and divide all wisdom and worth between ourselves and posterity,—not a very formidable rival to our self-love, as we attribute all its advantages to ourselves, though we pretend to owe little or nothing to our predecessors. About the time of the French Revolution, it was agreed that the world had hitherto been in its dotage or its infancy; and that Mr. Godwin, Condorcet, and others were to begin a new race of men —a new epoch in society. Every thing up to that period was to be set aside as puerile or barbarous; or, if there were any traces of thought and manliness now and then discoverable, they were to be regarded with wonder as prodigies—as irregular and fitful starts in that long sleep of reason and night of philosophy. In this liberal spirit Mr. Godwin composed an Essay, to prove that, till the publication of *The Enquiry concerning Political Justice*, no one knew how to write a word of common grammar, or a style that was not utterly uncouth, incongruous, and feeble. Addison, Swift, and Junius were included in this censure. The English language itself might be supposed to owe its stability and consistency, its roundness and polish, to the whirling motion of the French Revolution. Those who had gone before us were, like our grandfathers and grandmothers, decrepit, superannuated people, blind and dull; poor creatures, like flies in winter, without pith or marrow in them. The past was barren of interest—had neither thought nor object worthy to arrest our attention; and the future would be equally a senseless void, except as we projected ourselves and our theories into it. There is nothing I hate more than I do this exclusive, upstart spirit.

[1] When a certain poet was asked if he thought Lord Byron's name would live three years after he was dead, he answered, 'Not three days, Sir!' This was premature: it has lasted above a year. His works have been translated into French, and there is a *Caffé Byron* on the Boulevards. Think of a *Caffé Wordsworth* on the Boulevards!

'By Heavens, I'd rather be
A pagan suckled in a creed outworn,
So might I, standing on some pleasant lea,
Catch glimpses that might make me less forlorn,
Have sight of Proteus coming from the sea,
Or hear old Triton blow his wreathed horn.'

WORDSWORTH'S SONNETS.

Neither do I see the good of it even in a personal and interested point of view. By despising all that has preceded us, we teach others to despise ourselves. Where there is no established scale nor rooted faith in excellence, all superiority—our own as well as that of others—soon comes to the ground. By applying the wrong end of the magnifying-glass to all objects indiscriminately, the most respectable dwindle into insignificance, and the best are confounded with the worst. Learning, no longer supported by opinion, or genius by fame, is cast into the mire, and 'trampled under the hoofs of a swinish multitude.' I would rather endure the most blind and bigotted respect for great and illustrious names, than that pitiful, grovelling humour which has no pride in intellectual excellence, and no pleasure but in decrying those who have given proofs of it, and reducing them to its own level. If, with the diffusion of knowledge, we do not gain an enlargement and elevation of views, where is the benefit? If, by tearing asunder names from things, we do not leave even the name or shadow of excellence, it is better to let them remain as they were; for it is better to have something to admire than nothing—names, if not things—the shadow, if not the substance—the tinsel, if not the gold. All can now read and write equally; and, it is therefore presumed, equally well. Any thing short of this sweeping conclusion is an invidious distinction; and those who claim it for themselves or others are *exclusionists* in letters. Every one at least can call names—can invent a falsehood, or repeat a story against those who have galled their pragmatical pretensions by really adding to the stock of general amusement or instruction. Every one in a crowd has the power to throw dirt: nine out of ten have the inclination. It is curious that, in an age when the most universally-admitted claim to public distinction is literary merit, the attaining this distinction is almost a sure title to public contempt and obloquy.[1] They cry you up, because you are unknown, and do not excite their jealousy; and run you down, when they have thus distinguished you, out of envy and spleen at the very idol they have set up. A public favourite is 'kept like an apple in the jaw of an ape—first mouthed, to be after-

[1] Is not this partly owing to the disappointment of the public at finding any defect in their idol?

wards swallowed. When they need what you have gleaned, it is but squeezing you, and spunge, you shall be dry again.' At first they think only of the pleasure or advantage they receive: but, on reflection, they are mortified at the superiority implied in this involuntary concession, and are determined to be even with you the very first opportunity. What is the prevailing spirit of modern literature? To defame men of letters. What are the publications that succeed? Those that pretend to teach the public that the persons they have been accustomed unwittingly to look up to as the lights of the earth are no better than themselves, or a set of vagabonds or miscreants that should be hunted out of society.[1] Hence men of letters, losing their self-respect, become government-tools, and prostitute their talents to the most infamous purposes, or turn *dandy scribblers*, and set up for gentlemen authors in their own defence. I like the Order of the Jesuits better than this: they made themselves respected by the laity, kept their own secret, and did not prey on one another. Resume then, oh! Learning, thy robe pontifical; clothe thyself in pride and purple; join the sacred to the profane; wield both worlds; instead of twopenny trash and mechanics' magazines, issue bulls and decretals; say not, let there be light, but darkness visible; draw a bandage over the eyes of the ignorant and unlettered; hang the terrors of superstition and despotism over them;—and for thy pains they will bless thee: children will pull off their caps as thou dost pass; women will courtesy; the old will wipe their beards; and thou wilt rule once more over the base serving people, clowns, and nobles, with a rod of iron!

[1] An old friend of mine, when he read the abuse and billingsgate poured out in certain Tory publications, used to congratulate himself upon it as a favourable sign of the times, and of the progressive improvement of our manners. Where we now called names, we formerly burnt each other at a stake; and all the malice of the heart flew to the tongue and vented itself in scolding, instead of crusades and *auto-da-fés*—the nobler revenge of our ancestors for a difference of opinion. An author now libels a prince; and, if he takes the law of him or throws him into gaol, it is looked upon as a harsh and ungentlemanly proceeding. He, therefore, gets a dirty Secretary to employ a dirty bookseller, to hire a set of dirty scribblers, to pelt him with dirt and cover him with blackguard epithets—till he is hardly in a condition to walk the streets. This is hard measure, no doubt, and base ingratitude on the part of the public, according to the imaginary dignity and natural precedence which authors take of kings; but the latter are men, and will have their revenge where they can get it. They have no longer their old summary appeal—their will may still be good—to the dungeon and the dagger. Those who 'speak evil of dignities' may, therefore, think themselves well off in being merely *sent to Coventry*; and, besides, if they have *pluck*, they can make a Parthian retreat, and shoot poisoned arrows behind them. The good people of Florence lift up their hands when they are shewn the caricatures in the Queen's Matrimonial-Ladder, and ask if they are really a likeness of the King?

# ON DISAGREEABLE PEOPLE

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THOSE people who are uncomfortable in themselves are disagreeable to others. I do not here mean to speak of persons who offend intentionally, or are obnoxious to dislike from some palpable defect of mind or body, ugliness, pride, ill-humour, &c.,—but of those who are disagreeable in spite of themselves, and, as it might appear, with almost every qualification to recommend them to others. This want of success is owing chiefly to something in what is called their *manner*; and this again has its foundation in a certain cross-grained and unsociable state of feeling on their part, which influences us, perhaps, without our distinctly adverting to it. The mind is a finer instrument than we sometimes suppose it, and is not only swayed by overt acts and tangible proofs, but has an instinctive feeling of the air of truth. We find many individuals in whose company we pass our time, and have no particular fault to find with their understandings or character, and yet we are never thoroughly satisfied with them: the reason will turn out to be, upon examination, that they are never thoroughly satisfied with themselves, but uneasy and out of sorts all the time; and this makes us uneasy with them, without our reflecting on, or being able to discover the cause.

Thus, for instance, we meet with persons who do us a number of kindnesses, who shew us every mark of respect and good-will, who are friendly and serviceable,—and yet we do not feel grateful to them, after all. We reproach ourselves with this as caprice or insensibility, and try to get the better of it; but there is something in their way of doing things that prevents us from feeling cordial or sincerely obliged to them. We think them very worthy people, and would be glad of an opportunity to do them a good turn if it were in our power; but we cannot get beyond this: the utmost we can do is to save appearances, and not come to an open rupture with them. The truth is, in all such cases, we do not sympathise (as we ought) with them, because they do not sympathise (as they ought) with us. They have done what they did from a sense of duty in a cold dry manner, or from a meddlesome busybody humour; or to shew their superiority over us, or to patronise our infirmity; or they have dropped some hint by the way, or blundered upon some topic they should not, and have shewn, by one means or other, that they were occupied with any thing but the pleasure they were affording us, or a delicate attention to our feelings. Such persons may be styled *friendly grievances*. They are commonly people of low spirits and disappointed

views, who see the discouraging side of human life, and, with the best intentions in the world, contrive to make every thing they have to do with uncomfortable. They are alive to your distress, and take pains to remove it; but they have no satisfaction in the gaiety and ease they have communicated, and are on the *look-out* for some new occasion of signalizing their zeal; nor are they backward to insinuate that you will soon have need of their assistance, to guard you against running into fresh difficulties, or to extricate you from them. From large benevolence of soul and 'discourse of reason, looking before and after,' they are continually reminding you of something that has gone wrong in time past, or that may do so in that which is to come, and are surprised that their awkward hints, sly inuendos, blunt questions, and solemn features do not excite all the complacency and mutual good understanding in you which it is intended that they should. When they make themselves miserable on your account, it is hard that you will not lend them your countenance and support. This deplorable humour of theirs does not hit any one else. They are useful, but not agreeable people; they may assist you in your affairs, but they depress and tyrannise over your feelings. When they have made you happy, they will not let you be so—have no enjoyment of the good they have done—will on no account part with their melancholy and desponding tone—and, by their mawkish insensibility and doleful grimaces, throw a damp over the triumph they are called upon to celebrate. They would keep you in hot water, that they may help you out of it. They will nurse you in a fit of sickness (congenial sufferers!)—arbitrate a law-suit for you, and embroil you deeper—procure you a loan of money;—but all the while they are only delighted with rubbing the sore place, and casting the colour of your mental or other disorders. 'The whole need not a physician;' and, being once placed at ease and comfort, they have no farther use for you as subjects for their singular beneficence, and you are not sorry to be quit of their tiresome interference. The old proverb, *A friend in need is a friend indeed*, is not verified in them. The class of persons here spoken of are the very reverse of *summer-friends*, who court you in prosperity, flatter your vanity, are the humble servants of your follies, never see or allude to any thing wrong, minister to your gaiety, smooth over every difficulty, and, with the slightest approach of misfortune or of any thing unpleasant, take French leave:—

> 'As when, in prime of June, a burnished fly,
> Sprung from the meads, o'er which he sweeps along,
> Cheered by the breathing bloom and vital sky,
> Tunes up amid these airy halls his song,
> Soothing at first the gay reposing throng;

And oft he sips their bowl, or nearly drowned,
He thence recovering drives their beds among,
And scares their tender sleep with trump profound;
Then out again he flies to wing his mazy round.'
THOMSON'S CASTLE OF INDOLENCE.

However we may despise such triflers, yet we regret them more than those well-meaning friends on whom a dull melancholy vapour hangs, that drags them and every one about them to the ground.

Again, there are those who might be very agreeable people, if they had but spirit to be so; but there is a narrow, unaspiring, under-bred tone in all they say or do. They have great sense and information—abound in a knowledge of character—have a fund of anecdote—are unexceptionable in manners and appearance—and yet we cannot make up our minds to like them: we are not glad to see them, nor sorry when they go away. Our familiarity with them, however great, wants the principle of cement, which is a certain appearance of frank cordiality and social enjoyment. They have no pleasure in the subjects of their own thoughts, and therefore can communicate none to others. There is a dry, husky, grating manner—a pettiness of detail—a tenaciousness of particulars, however trifling or unpleasant—a disposition to cavil—an aversion to enlarged and liberal views of things—in short, a hard, painful, unbending *matter-of-factness*, from which the spirit and effect are banished, and the letter only is attended to, which makes it impossible to sympathise with their discourse. To make conversation interesting or agreeable, there is required either the habitual tone of good company, which gives a favourable colouring to every thing—or the warmth and enthusiasm of genius, which, though it may occasionally offend or be thrown off its guard, makes amends by its rapturous flights, and flings a glancing light upon all things. The literal and *dogged* style of conversation resembles that of a French picture, or its mechanical fidelity is like evidence given in a court of justice, or a police report.

From the literal to the plain-spoken, the transition is easy. The most efficient weapon of offence is truth. Those who deal in dry and repulsive matters-of-fact, tire out their friends; those who blurt out hard and home truths, make themselves mortal enemies wherever they come. There are your blunt, honest creatures, who omit no opportunity of letting you know their minds, and are sure to tell you all the ill, and conceal all the good they hear of you. They would not flatter you for the world, and to caution you against the malice of others, they think the province of a friend. This is not candour, but impudence; and yet they think it odd you are not charmed with their unreserved communicativeness of disposition. Gossips and tale-bearers,

on the contrary, who supply the *tittle-tattle* of the neighbourhood, flatter you to your face, and laugh at you behind your back, are welcome and agreeable guests in all companies. Though you know it will be your turn next, yet for the sake of the immediate gratification, you are contented to pay your share of the public tax upon character, and are better pleased with the falsehoods that never reach your ears, than with the truths that others (less complaisant and more sincere) utter to your face—so short-sighted and willing to be imposed upon is our self-love! There is a man, who has the air of not being convinced without an argument: you avoid him as if he were a lion in your path. There is another, who asks you fifty questions as to the commonest things you advance: you would sooner pardon a fellow who held a pistol to your breast and demanded your money. No one regards a turnpike-keeper, or a custom-house officer, with a friendly eye: he who stops you in an excursion of fancy, or ransacks the articles of your belief obstinately and churlishly, to distinguish the spurious from the genuine, is still more your foe. These inquisitors and cross-examiners upon system make ten enemies for every controversy in which they engage. The world dread nothing so much as being convinced of their errors. In doing them this piece of service, you make war equally on their prejudices, their interests, their pride, and indolence. You not only set up for a superiority of understanding over them, which they hate, but you deprive them of their ordinary grounds of action, their topics of discourse, of their confidence in themselves, and those to whom they have been accustomed to look up for instruction and advice. It is making children of them. You unhinge all their established opinions and trains of thought; and after leaving them in this listless, vacant, unsettled state—dissatisfied with their own notions and shocked at yours—you expect them to court and be delighted with your company, because, forsooth, you have only expressed your sincere and conscientious convictions. Mankind are not deceived by professions, unless they choose. They think that this pill of true doctrine, however it may be gilded over, is full of gall and bitterness to them; and, again, it is a maxim of which the vulgar are firmly persuaded, that plain-speaking (as it is called) is, nine parts in ten, spleen and self-opinion; and the other part, perhaps, honesty. Those who will not abate an inch in argument, and are always seeking to recover the wind of you, are, in the eye of the world, disagreeable, unconscionable people, who ought to be *sent to Coventry*, or left to wrangle by themselves. No persons, however, are more averse to contradiction than these same dogmatists. What shews our susceptibility on this point is, there is no flattery so adroit or effectual as that of implicit

assent. Any one, however mean his capacity or ill-qualified to judge, who gives way to all our sentiments, and never seems to think but as we do, is indeed an *alter idem*—another self; and we admit him without scruple into our entire confidence, 'yea, into our heart of hearts.'

It is the same in books. Those which, under the disguise of plain-speaking, vent paradoxes, and set their faces against the common-sense of mankind, are neither 'the volumes

——'That enrich the shops,
That pass with approbation through the land;'

nor, I fear, can it be added—

'That bring their authors an immortal fame.'

They excite a clamour and opposition at first, and are in general soon consigned to oblivion. Even if the opinions are in the end adopted, the authors gain little by it, and their names remain in their original obloquy; for the public will own no obligations to such ungracious benefactors. In like manner, there are many books written in a very delightful vein, though with little in them, and that are accordingly popular. Their principle is to please, and not to offend; and they succeed in both objects. We are contented with the deference shown to our feelings for the time, and grant a truce both to wit and wisdom. The 'courteous reader' and the good-natured author are well matched in this instance, and find their account in mutual tenderness and forbearance to each other's infirmities. I am not sure that Walton's Angler is not a book of this last description—

'That dallies with the innocence of thought,
Like the old age.'

Hobbes and Mandeville are in the opposite extreme, and have met with a correspondent fate. The Tatler and the Spectator are in the golden mean, carry instruction as far as it can go without shocking, and give the most exquisite pleasure without one particle of pain. '*Desire to please, and you will infallibly please*,' is a maxim equally applicable to the study or the drawing-room. Thus also we see actors of very small pretensions, and who have scarce any other merit than that of being on good terms with themselves, and in high good humour with their parts (though they hardly understand a word of them), who are universal favourites with the audience. Others, who are masters of their art, and in whom no slip or flaw can be detected, you have no pleasure in seeing, from something dry, repulsive, and unconciliating in their manner; and you almost hate the

very mention of their names, as an unavailing appeal to your candid decision in their favour, and as taxing you with injustice for refusing it.

We may observe persons who seem to take a peculiar delight in the *disagreeable*. They catch all sorts of uncouth tones and gestures, the manners and dialect of clowns and hoydens, and aim at vulgarity as desperately as others ape gentility. [This is what is often understood by a *love of low life*.] They say the most unwarrantable things, without meaning or feeling what they say. What startles or shocks other people, is to them a sport—an amusing excitement—a fillip to their constitutions; and from the bluntness of their perceptions, and a certain wilfulness of spirit, not being able to enter into the refined and agreeable, they make a merit of despising every thing of the kind. Masculine women, for example, are those who, not being distinguished by the charms and delicacy of the sex, affect a superiority over it by throwing aside all decorum. We also find another class, who continually do and say what they ought not, and what they do not intend, and who are governed almost entirely by an instinct of absurdity. Owing to a perversity of imagination or irritability of nerve, the idea that a thing is improper acts as a provocation to it: the fear of committing a blunder is so strong, that in their agitation they *bolt* out whatever is uppermost in their minds, before they are aware of the consequence. The dread of something wrong haunts and rivets their attention to it; and an uneasy, morbid apprehensiveness of temper takes away their self-possession, and hurries them into the very mistakes they are most anxious to avoid.

If we look about us, and ask who are the agreeable and disagreeable people in the world, we shall see that it does not depend on their virtues or vices—their understanding or stupidity—but as much on the degree of pleasure or pain they seem to feel in ordinary social intercourse. What signify all the good qualities any one possesses, if he is none the better for them himself? If the cause is so delightful, the effect ought to be so too. We enjoy a friend's society only in proportion as he is satisfied with ours. Even wit, however it may startle, is only agreeable as it is sheathed in good-humour. There are a kind of *intellectual stammerers*, who are delivered of their good things with pain and effort; and consequently what costs them such evident uneasiness does not impart unmixed delight to the bystanders. There are those, on the contrary, whose sallies cost them nothing—who abound in a flow of pleasantry and good-humour; and who float down the stream with them carelessly and triumphantly,—

'Wit at the helm, and Pleasure at the prow.'

Perhaps it may be said of English wit in general, that it too much

resembles pointed lead: after all, there is something heavy and dull in it! The race of small wits are not the least agreeable people in the world. They have their little joke to themselves, enjoy it, and do not set up any preposterous pretensions to thwart the current of our self-love. Toad-eating is accounted a thriving profession; and a *butt*, according to the Spectator, is a highly useful member of society—as one who takes whatever is said of him in good part, and as necessary to conduct off the spleen and superfluous petulance of the company. Opposed to these are the swaggering bullies—the licensed wits—the free-thinkers—the loud talkers, who, in the jockey phrase, have *lost their mouths*, and cannot be reined in by any regard to decency or common-sense. The more obnoxious the subject, the more are they charmed with it, converting their want of feeling into a proof of superiority to vulgar prejudice and squeamish affectation. But there is an unseemly exposure of the mind, as well as of the body. There are some objects that shock the sense, and cannot with propriety be mentioned: there are naked truths that offend the mind, and ought to be kept out of sight as much as possible. For human nature cannot bear to be too hardly pressed upon. One of these cynical truisms, when brought forward to the world, may be forgiven as a slip of the pen: a succession of them, denoting a deliberate purpose and *malice prepense*, must ruin any writer. Lord Byron had got into an irregular course of these a little before his death—seemed desirous, in imitation of Mr. Shelley, to run the gauntlet of public obloquy—and, at the same time, wishing to screen himself from the censure he defied, dedicated his Cain to Sir Walter Scott—a pretty godfather to such a bantling!

Some persons are of so teazing and fidgetty a turn of mind, that they do not give you a moment's rest. Every thing goes wrong with them. They complain of a headache or the weather. They take up a book, and lay it down again—venture an opinion, and retract it before they have half done—offer to serve you, and prevent some one else from doing it. If you dine with them at a tavern, in order to be more at your ease, the fish is too little done—the sauce is not the right one; they ask for a sort of wine which they think is not to be had, or if it is, after some trouble, procured, do not touch it; they give the waiter fifty contradictory orders, and are restless and sit on thorns the whole of dinner-time. All this is owing to a want of robust health, and of a strong spirit of enjoyment; it is a fastidious habit of mind, produced by a valetudinary habit of body: they are out of sorts with every thing, and of course their ill-humour and captiousness communicates itself to you, who are as little delighted with them as they are with other things. Another sort of people,

equally objectionable with this helpless class, who are disconcerted by a shower of rain or stopped by an insect's wing, are those who, in the opposite spirit, will have every thing their own way, and carry all before them—who cannot brook the slightest shadow of opposition—who are always in the heat of an argument—who knit their brows and clench their teeth in some speculative discussion, as if they were engaged in a personal quarrel—and who, though successful over almost every competitor, seem still to resent the very offer of resistance to their supposed authority, and are as angry as if they had sustained some premeditated injury. There is an impatience of temper and an intolerance of opinion in this that conciliates neither our affection nor esteem. To such persons nothing appears of any moment but the indulgence of a domineering intellectual superiority to the disregard and discomfiture of their own and every body else's comfort. Mounted on an abstract proposition, they trample on every courtesey and decency of behaviour; and though, perhaps, they do not intend the gross personalities they are guilty of, yet they cannot be acquitted of a want of due consideration for others, and of an intolerable egotism in the support of truth and justice. You may hear one of these Quixotic declaimers pleading the cause of humanity in a voice of thunder, or expatiating on the beauty of a Guido with features distorted with rage and scorn. This is not a very amiable or edifying spectacle.

There are persons who cannot make friends. Who are they? Those who cannot be friends. It is not the want of understanding or good-nature, of entertaining or useful qualities, that you complain of: on the contrary, they have probably many points of attraction; but they have one that neutralises all these—they care nothing about you, and are neither the better nor worse for what you think of them. They manifest no joy at your approach; and when you leave them, it is with a feeling that they can do just as well without you. This is not sullenness, nor indifference, nor absence of mind; but they are intent solely on their own thoughts, and you are merely one of the subjects they exercise them upon. They live in society as in a solitude; and, however their brain works, their pulse beats neither faster nor slower for the common accidents of life. There is, therefore, something cold and repulsive in the air that is about them —like that of marble. In a word, they are *modern philosophers*; and the modern philosopher is what the pedant was of old—a being who lives in a world of his own, and has no correspondence with this. It is not that such persons have not done you services—you acknowledge it; it is not that they have said severe things of you—you submit to it as a necessary evil: but it is the cool manner in which the whole

is done that annoys you—the speculating upon you, as if you were nobody—the regarding you, with a view to experiment *in corpore vili*—the principle of dissection—the determination to spare no blemishes—to cut you down to your real standard;—in short, the utter absence of the partiality of friendship, the blind enthusiasm of affection, or the delicacy of common decency, that whether they 'hew you as a carcase fit for hounds, or carve you as a dish fit for the gods,' the operation on your feelings and your sense of obligation is just the same; and, whether they are demons or angels in themselves, you wish them equally *at the devil*!

Other persons of worth and sense give way to mere violence of temperament (with which the understanding has nothing to do)—are burnt up with a perpetual fury—repel and throw you to a distance by their restless, whirling motion—so that you dare not go near them, or feel as uneasy in their company as if you stood on the edge of a volcano. They have their *tempora mollia fandi*; but then what a stir may you not expect the next moment! Nothing is less inviting or less comfortable than this state of uncertainty and apprehension. Then there are those who never approach you without the most alarming advice or information, telling you that you are in a dying way, or that your affairs are on the point of ruin, by way of disburthening their consciences; and others, who give you to understand much the same thing as a good joke, out of sheer impertinence, constitutional vivacity, and want of something to say. All these, it must be confessed, are disagreeable people; and you repay their over-anxiety or total forgetfulness of you, by a determination to cut them as speedily as possible. We meet with instances of persons who overpower you by a sort of boisterous mirth and rude animal spirits, with whose ordinary state of excitement it is as impossible to keep up as with that of any one really intoxicated; and with others who seem scarce alive—who take no pleasure or interest in any thing—who are born to exemplify the maxim,

> 'Not to admire is all the art I know
> To make men happy, or to keep them so,'—

and whose mawkish insensibility or sullen scorn are equally annoying. In general, all people brought up in remote country places, where life is crude and harsh—all sectaries—all partisans of a losing cause, are discontented and disagreeable. Commend me above all to the Westminster School of Reform, whose blood runs as cold in their veins as the torpedo's, and whose touch jars like it. Catholics are, upon the whole, more amiable than Protestants—foreigners than English people. Among ourselves, the Scotch, as a nation, are

particularly disagreeable. They hate every appearance of comfort themselves, and refuse it to others. Their climate, their religion, and their habits are equally averse to pleasure. Their manners are either distinguished by a fawning sycophancy (to gain their own ends, and conceal their natural defects), that makes one sick; or by a morose unbending callousness, that makes one shudder. I had forgot to mention two other descriptions of persons who fall under the scope of this essay:—those who take up a subject, and run on with it interminably, without knowing whether their hearers care one word about it, or in the least minding what reception their oratory meets with—these are pretty generally voted *bores* (mostly German ones);—and others, who may be designated as practical paradox-mongers—who discard the 'milk of human kindness,' and an attention to common observances, from all their actions, as effeminate and puling—who wear a white hat as a mark of superior understanding, and carry home a handkerchief-full of mushrooms in the top of it as an original discovery—who give you craw-fish for supper instead of lobsters; seek their company in a garret, and over a gin-bottle, to avoid the imputation of affecting genteel society; and discard them after a term of years, and warn others against them, as being *honest fellows*, which is thought a vulgar prejudice. This is carrying the harsh and repulsive even beyond the disagreeable—to the hateful. Such persons are generally people of common-place understandings, obtuse feelings, and inordinate vanity. They are formidable if they get you in their power—otherwise, they are only to be laughed at.

There are a vast number who are disagreeable from meanness of spirit, from downright insolence, from slovenliness of dress or disgusting tricks, from folly or ignorance: but these causes are positive moral or physical defects, and I only meant to speak of that repulsiveness of manners which arises from want of tact and sympathy with others. So far of friendship: a word, if I durst, of love. Gallantry to women (the sure road to their favour) is nothing but the appearance of extreme devotion to all their wants and wishes—a delight in their satisfaction, and a confidence in yourself, as being able to contribute towards it. The slightest indifference with regard to them, or distrust of yourself, are equally fatal. The amiable is the voluptuous in looks, manner, or words. No face that exhibits this kind of expression—whether lively or serious, obvious or suppressed, will be thought ugly—no address, awkward—no lover who approaches every woman he meets as his mistress, will be unsuccessful. Diffidence and awkwardness are the two antidotes to love.

To please universally, we must be pleased with ourselves and others. There should be a tinge of the coxcomb, an oil of self-complacency,

an anticipation of success—there should be no gloom, no moroseness no shyness—in short, there should be very little of an Englishman, and a good deal of a Frenchman. But though, I believe, this is the receipt, we are none the nearer making use of it. It is impossible for those who are naturally disagreeable ever to become otherwise. This is some consolation, as it may save a world of useless pains and anxiety. '*Desire to please, and you will infallibly please*,' is a true maxim; but it does not follow that it is in the power of all to practise it. A vain man, who thinks he is endeavouring to please, is only endeavouring to shine, and is still farther from the mark. An irritable man, who puts a check upon himself, only grows dull, and loses spirit to be any thing. Good temper and a happy spirit (which are the indispensable requisites) can no more be commanded than good health or good looks; and though the plain and sickly need not distort their features, and may abstain from success, this is all they can do. The utmost a disagreeable person can do is to hope to be less disagreeable than with care and study he might become, and to pass unnoticed in society. With this negative character he should be contented, and may build his fame and happiness on other things.

I will conclude with a character of men who neither please nor aspire to please anybody, and who can come in nowhere so properly as at the fag-end of an essay:—I mean that class of discontented but amusing persons, who are infatuated with their own ill success, and reduced to despair by a lucky turn in their favour. While all goes well, they are *like fish out of water*. They have no reliance on or sympathy with their good fortune, and look upon it as a momentary delusion. Let a doubt be thrown on the question, and they begin to be full of lively apprehensions again: let all their hopes vanish, and they feel themselves on firm ground once more. From want of spirit or of habit, their imaginations cannot rise above the low ground of humility—cannot reflect the gay, flaunting tints of the fancy—flag and droop into despondency—and can neither indulge the expectation, nor employ the means of success. Even when it is within their reach, they dare not lay hands upon it; and shrink from unlooked-for bursts of prosperity, as something of which they are both ashamed and unworthy. The class of *croakers* here spoken of are less delighted at other people's misfortunes than their own. Their neighbours may have some pretensions—they have none. Querulous complaints and anticipations of discomfort are the food on which they live; and they at last acquire a passion for that which is the favourite theme of their thoughts, and can no more do without it than without the pinch of snuff with which they season their conversation, and enliven the pauses of their daily prognostics.

# ON MEANS AND ENDS

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'We work by wit, and not by witchcraft.'—Iago.

It is impossible to have things done without doing them. This seems a truism; and yet what is more common than to suppose that we shall find things done, merely by wishing it? *To put the will for the deed* is as usual in practice as it is contrary to common sense. There is, in fact, no absurdity, no contradiction, of which the mind is not capable. This weakness is, I think, more remarkable in the English than in any other people, in whom (to judge by what I discover in myself) the will bears great and disproportioned sway. We desire a thing: we contemplate the end intently, and think it done, neglecting the necessary means to accomplish it. The strong tendency of the mind towards it, the internal effort it makes to give birth to the object of its idolatry, seems an adequate cause to produce the wished-for effect, and is in a manner identified with it. This is more particularly the case in what relates to the *Fine Arts*, and will account for some phenomena in the national character.

The English style is distinguished by what are called *ébauches*[1]—rude sketches, or violent attempts at effect, with a total inattention to the details or delicacy of finishing. Now this, I apprehend, proceeds not exactly from grossness of perception, but from the wilfulness of our characters, our determination to have every thing our own way without any trouble, or delay, or distraction of mind. An object strikes us: we see and feel the whole effect at once. We wish to produce a likeness of it; but we wish to transfer the impression to the canvas as it is conveyed to us, simultaneously and intuitively—that is, to stamp it there at a blow—or, otherwise, we turn away with impatience and disgust, as if the means were an obstacle to the end, and every attention to the mechanical process were a deviation from our original purpose. We thus degenerate, by repeated failures, into a slovenly style of art; and that which was at first an undisciplined and irregular impulse, becomes a habit, and then a theory. It seems a little strange that the zealous devotion to the end should produce aversion to the means; but so it is: neither is it, however irrational, altogether unnatural. That which we are struck with, which we are enamoured of, is the general appearance or result; and it would certainly be most desirable to produce the effect we aim at by a word or wish, if it were possible, without

[1] Properly, *daubs*.

being taken up with the mechanical drudgery or pettiness of detail, or dexterity of execution, which, though they are essential and component parts of the work, do not enter into our thoughts, or form any part of our contemplation. In a word, the hand does not keep pace with the eye; and it is the desire that it should, that causes all the contradiction and confusion. We would have a face to start out from the canvas at once—not feature by feature, or touch by touch; we would be glad to convey an attitude or a divine expression to the spectator by a stroke of the pencil, as it is conveyed by a glance of the eye, or by the magic of feeling, independently of measurements, and distances, and foreshortening, and numberless minute particulars, and all the instrumentality of the art. We may find it necessary, on a cool calculation, to go through and make ourselves masters of these; but, in so doing, we submit only to necessity, and they are still a diversion to, and a suspension of, our favourite purpose for the time—at least unless practice has given that facility which almost identifies the two together, and makes the process an unconscious one. The end thus devours up the means; or our eagerness for the one, where it is strong and unchecked, renders us in proportion impatient of the other. So we view an object at a distance, which excites in us an inclination to visit it: this, after many tedious steps and intricate windings, we do; but, if we could fly, we should never consent to go on foot. The mind, however, has wings, though the body has not; and, wherever the imagination can come into play, our desires outrun their accomplishment. Persons of this extravagant humour should addict themselves to eloquence or poetry, where the thought 'leaps at once to its effect,' and is wafted, in a metaphor or an apostrophe, 'from Indus to the Pole;' though even there we should find enough, in the preparatory and mechanical parts of those arts, to try our patience and mortify our vanity! The first and strongest impulse of the mind is to achieve any object, on which it is set, at once, and by the shortest and most decisive means; but, as this cannot always be done, we ought not to neglect other more indirect and subordinate aids; nor should we be tempted to do so, but that the delusions of the will interfere with the convictions of the understanding, and what we ardently wish, we fancy to be both possible and true. Let us take the instance of copying a fine picture. We are full of the effect we intend to produce; and so powerfully does this prepossession affect us, that we imagine we have produced it, in spite of the evidence of our senses and the suggestions of friends. In truth, after a number of violent and anxious efforts to strike off a resemblance which we passionately long for, it seems an injustice not to have succeeded; it is too late to retrace our steps, and begin over again in a different

method; we prefer even failure to arriving at our end by petty, mechanical tricks and rules; we have copied Titian or Rubens in the spirit in which they ought to be copied; though the likeness may not be perfect, there is a look, a tone, a *something*, which we chiefly aimed at, and which we persuade ourselves, seeing the copy only through the dazzled, hectic flush of feverish imagination, we have really given; and thus we persist, and make fifty excuses, sooner than own our error, which would imply its abandonment; or, if the light breaks in upon us, through all the disguises of sophistry and self-love, it is so painful that we shut our eyes to it. The more evident our failure, the more desperate the struggles we make to conceal it from ourselves, to stick to our original determination, and end where we began.

What makes me think that this is the real stumbling-block in our way, and not mere rusticity or want of discrimination, is that you will see an English artist admiring and thrown into downright raptures by the tucker of Titian's *Mistress*, made up of an infinite number of little delicate folds; and, if he attempts to copy it, he proceeds deliberately to omit all these details, and dash it off by a single smear of his brush. This is not ignorance, or even laziness, I conceive, so much as what is called *jumping at a conclusion*. It is, in a word, an overweening presumption. 'A wilful man must have his way.' He sees the details, the varieties, and their effect: he sees and is charmed with all this; but he would reproduce it with the same rapidity and unembarrassed freedom that he sees it—or not at all. He scorns the slow but sure method, to which others conform, as tedious and inanimate. The mixing his colours, the laying in the ground, the giving all his attention to a minute break or nice gradation in the several lights and shades, is a mechanical and endless operation, very different from the delight he feels in studying the effect of all these, when properly and ably executed. *Quam nihil ad tuum, Papiniane, ingenium!* Such fooleries are foreign to his refined taste and lofty enthusiasm; and a doubt crosses his mind, in the midst of his warmest raptures, how Titian could resolve upon the drudgery of going through them, or whether it was not rather owing to extreme facility of hand, and a sort of trick in laying on the colours, abridging the mechanical labour! No one wrote or talked more eloquently about Titian's harmony and clearness of colouring than the late Mr. Barry—discoursing of his greens, his blues, his yellows, 'the little red and white of which he composed his flesh-colour,' *con amore*; yet his own colouring was dead and dingy, and, if he had copied a Titian, he would have made it a mere daub, leaving out all that caused his wonder or admiration, or that induced him to copy it after the English or Irish fashion. We not only grudge the labour of beginning, but we stop short, for

the same reason, when we are near touching the goal of success, and, to save a few last touches, leave a work unfinished and an object unattained. The immediate steps, the daily gradual improvement, the successive completion of parts, give us no pleasure; we strain at the final result; we wish to have the whole done, and, in our anxiety to get it off our hands, say *it will do*, and lose the benefit of all our pains by stinting a little more, and being unable to command a little patience. In a day or two, we will suppose, a copy of a fine Titian would be as like as we could make it: the prospect of this so enchants us, that we skip the intervening space, see no great use in going on with it, fancy that we may spoil it, and, in order to put an end to the question, take it home with us, where we immediately see our error, and spend the rest of our lives in regretting that we did not finish it properly when we were about it. We can execute only a part; we see the whole of nature or of a picture at once. *Hinc illæ lachrymæ.* The English grasp at this whole—nothing less interests or contents them; and, in aiming at too much, they miss their object altogether.

A French artist, on the contrary, has none of this uneasy, anxious feeling—of this desire to master the whole of his subject, and anticipate his good fortune at a blow—of this *massing* and concentrating principle. He takes the thing more easy and rationally. He has none of the mental qualms, the nervous agitation, the wild, desperate plunges and convulsive throes of the English artist. He does not set off headlong without knowing where he is going, and find himself up to the neck in all sorts of difficulties and absurdities, from impatience to begin and have the matter off his mind (as if it were an evil conscience); but takes time to consider, arranges his plans, gets in his outline and his distances, and lays a foundation before he attempts a superstructure which he may have to pull in pieces again, or let it remain—a monument of his folly. *He looks before he leaps*, which is contrary to the true blindfold English rule; and I should think that we had invented this proverb from seeing so many fatal examples of the violation of it. Suppose he undertakes to make a copy of a picture: he first looks at it, and sees what it is. He does not make his sketch all black or all white, because one part of it is so, and because he cannot alter an idea he has once got into his head and must always run into extremes, but varies his tints (strange as it may seem) from green to red, from orange-tawney to yellow, from grey to brown, according as they vary in the original. He sees no inconsistency, no forfeiture of a principle, in this (any more than Mr. Southey in the change of the colours of his coat), but a great deal of right reason, and indeed an absolute necessity for it, if he wishes to succeed in what he is about. This is the last thing in an Englishman's

thoughts: he only wishes to have his own way, though it ends in defeat and ruin—strives hard to do what he is sensible he cannot —or, if he finds he can, gives over and leaves the matter short of a triumphant conclusion, which is too flattering an idea for him to indulge in. The French artist proceeds with due deliberation, and bit by bit. He takes some one part—a hand, an eye, a piece of drapery, an object in the background—and finishes it carefully; then another, and so on to the end. When he has gone through every part, his picture is done: there is nothing more that he can add to it; it is a numerical calculation, and there are only so many items in the account. An Englishman may go on *slobbering* his over for the hundredth time, and be no nearer than when he began. As he tries to finish the whole at once, and as this is not possible, he always leaves his work in an imperfect state, or as if he had begun on a new canvas—like a man who is determined to leap to the top of a tower, instead of scaling it step by step, and who is necessarily thrown on his back every time he repeats the experiment. Again, the French student does not, from a childish impatience, when he is near the end, destroy the effect of the whole, by leaving some one part eminently deficient, an eye-sore to the rest; nor does he fly from what he is about, to any thing else that happens to catch his eye, neglecting the one and spoiling the other. He is, in our old poet's phrase, 'constrained by mastery,' by the mastery of common sense and pleasurable feeling. He is in no hurry to get to the end; for he has a satisfaction in the work, and touches and retouches perhaps a single head, day after day and week after week, without repining, uneasiness, or apparent progress. The very lightness and buoyancy of his feeling renders him (where the necessity of this is pointed out) patient and laborious. An Englishman, whatever he undertakes, is as if he was carrying a heavy load that oppresses both his body and mind, and that he is anxious to throw down as soon as possible. The Frenchman's hopes and fears are not excited to a pitch of intolerable agony, so that he is compelled, in mere compassion to himself, to bring the question to a speedy issue, even to the loss of his object. He is calm, easy, collected, and takes his time and improves his advantages as they occur, with vigilance and alacrity. Pleased with himself, he is pleased with whatever occupies his attention nearly alike. He is never taken at a disadvantage. Whether he paints an angel or a joint-stool, it is much the same to him: whether it is landscape or history, still it is he who paints it. Nothing puts him out of his way, for nothing puts him out of conceit with himself. This self-complacency forms an admirable groundwork for moderation and docility in certain particulars, though not in others.

I remember an absurd instance enough of this deliberate mode of setting to work in a young French artist, who was copying the Titian's *Mistress* in the Louvre, some twenty years ago. After getting in his chalk-outline, one would think he might have been attracted to the face—that heaven of beauty (as it appears to some), clear, transparent, open, breathing freshness, that 'makes a sunshine in the shady place'; or to the lustre of the golden hair; or some part of the poetry of the picture (for, with all its materiality, this picture has a poetry about it); instead of which he began to finish a square he had marked out in the right-hand corner of the picture, containing a piece of board and a bottle of some kind of ointment. He set to work like a cabinet-maker or an engraver, and appeared to have no sympathy with the soul of the picture. On a Frenchman (generally speaking), the distinction between the great and the little, the exquisite and the indifferent, is in a great measure lost: his self-satisfied egotism supplies whatever is wanting up to a certain point, and neutralizes whatever goes beyond it. Another young man, at the time I speak of, was for eleven weeks daily employed in making a black-lead pencil drawing of a small Leonardo: he sat with his legs balanced across a rail to do it, kept his hat on, every now and then consulted with his friends about his progress, rose up, went to the fire to warm himself, talked of the styles of the different masters—praising Titian *pour les coloris*, Raphael *pour l'expression*, Poussin *pour la composition*—all being alike to him, provided they had each something to help him on in his harangue (for that was all he thought about),—and then returned to *perfectionate* (as he called it) his copy. This would drive an Englishman out of his senses, supposing him to be ever so stupid. The perseverance and the interruptions, the labour without impulse, the attention to the parts in succession, and disregard of the whole together, are to him utterly incomprehensible. He wants to do something striking, and bends all his thoughts and energies to one mighty effort. A Frenchman has no notion of this summary proceeding, exists mostly in his present sensations, and, if he is left at liberty to enjoy or trifle with these, cares about nothing farther, looking neither backwards nor forwards. They forgot the reign of terror under Robespierre in a month; they forgot that they had ever been called the *great nation* under Buonaparte in a week. They sat in chairs on the Boulevards (just as they do at other times), when the shots were firing into the next street, and were only persuaded to quit them when their own soldiers were seen pouring down all the avenues from the heights of Montmartre, crying '*Sauve qui peut!*' They then went home and dressed themselves to see the *Allies* enter Paris, as a fine sight, just as they would witness a procession at a

theatre. This is carrying the instinct of levity as far as it will go. With all their affectation and want of sincerity, there is, on the principle here stated, a kind of simplicity and nature about them after all. They lend themselves to the impression of the moment with good humour and good will, making it not much better nor worse than it is: the English constantly over-do or under-do every thing, and are either mad with enthusiasm or in despair. The extreme slowness and regularity of the French school have then arisen, as a natural consequence, out of their very fickleness and frivolity (their severally supposed national characteristics); for, owing to the last, their studious exactness costs them nothing; and, again, they have no headstrong impulses or ardent longings that urge them on to the violation of rules, or hurry them away with a subject or with the interest belonging to it. All is foreseen and settled before-hand, so as to assist the fluttering and feeble hold they have of things. When they venture beyond the literal and formal, and (mistaking pedantry and bombast for genius) attempt the grand and the impressive style, as in David's and Girodet's pictures, the Lord deliver us from sublimity engrafted on insipidity and *petit-maître-ism*! You see a solitary French artist in the Louvre copying a Raphael or a Rubens, standing on one leg, not quite sure of what he is about: you see them collected in groupes about David's, elbowing each other, thinking them even finer than Raphael, more truly themselves, a more perfect combination of all that can be taught by the Greek sculptor and the French posture-master! Is this patriotism, or want of taste? If the former, it is excusable, and why not, if the latter?

Even should a French artist fail, he is not disconcerted—there is something else he excels in: 'for one unkind and cruel fair, another still consoles him.' He studies in a more graceful posture, or pays greater attention to his dress; or he has a friend, who has *beaucoup du talent*, and conceit enough for them both. His self-love has always a salvo, and comes upon its legs again, like a cat or a monkey. Not so with Bruin the Bear. If an Englishman (God help the mark!) fails in one thing, it is all over with him; he is enraged at the mention of any thing else he can do, and at every consolation offered him on that score; he banishes all other thoughts, but of his disappointment and discomfiture, from his breast—neither eats nor sleeps (it is well if he does not swallow down double 'potations, pottle-deep,' to drown remembrance)—will not own, even to himself, any other thing in which he takes an interest or feels a pride; and is in the horrors till he recovers his good opinion of himself in the only point on which he now sets a value, and for which his anxiety and disorder of mind incapacitate him as

effectually as if he were drunk with strong liquor instead of spleen and passion. I have here drawn the character of an Englishman, I am sure; for it is a portrait of myself, and, I am sorry to add, an unexaggerated one. I intend these Essays as studies of human nature; and as, in the prosecution of this design, I do not spare others, I see no reason why I should spare myself. I lately tried to make a copy of a portrait by Titian (after several years' want of practice), with a view to give a friend in England some notion of the picture, which is equally remarkable and fine. I failed, and floundered on for some days, as might be expected. I must say the effect on me was painful and excessive. My sky was suddenly overcast. Every thing seemed of the colour of the paints I used. Nature in my eyes became dark and gloomy. I had no sense or feeling left, but of the unforeseen want of power, and of the tormenting struggle to do what I could not. I was ashamed ever to have written or spoken on art: it seemed a piece of vanity and affectation in me to do so—all whose reasonings and refinements on the subject ended in an execrable daub. Why did I think of attempting such a thing without weighing the consequences of exposing my presumption and incapacity so unnecessarily? It was blotting from my mind, covering with a thick veil all that I remembered of these pictures formerly—my hopes when young, my regrets since, one of the few consolations of my life and of my declining years. I was even afraid to walk out of an evening by the barrier of Neuilly, or to recal the yearnings and associations that once hung upon the beatings of my heart. All was turned to bitterness and gall. To feel any thing but the consciousness of my own helplessness and folly, appeared a want of sincerity, a mockery, and an insult to my mortified pride! The only relief I had was in the excess of pain I felt: this was at least some distinction. I was not insensible on that side. No French artist, I thought, would regret *not* copying a Titian so much as I did, nor so far shew the same value for it, however he might have the advantage of me in drawing or mechanical dexterity. Besides, I had copied this very picture very well formerly. If ever I got out of my present scrape, I had at any rate received a lesson not to run the same risk of vexation, or commit myself gratuitously again upon any occasion whatever. Oh! happy ought they to be, I said, who can do any thing, when I feel the misery, the agony, the dull, gnawing pain of being unable to do what I wish in this single instance! When I copied this picture before, I had no other resource, no other language. My tongue then stuck to the roof of my mouth: now it is unlocked, and I have done what I then despaired of doing in another way. Ought I not to be grateful and contented? Oh, yes!—and think how many there

are who have nothing to which they can turn themselves, and fail in every object they undertake. Well, then, *Let bygones be bygones* (as the Scotch proverb has it); give up the attempt, and think no more of Titian, or of the portait of a Man in black in the Louvre. This would be very well for any one else; but for me, who had nearly exhausted the subject on paper, that I should take it into my head to paint a libel of what I had composed so many and such fine panegyrics upon—it was a fatality, a judgment upon me for my vapouring and conceit. I must be as shy of the subject for the future as a damned author is of the title of his play or the name of his hero ever after. Yet the picture would look the same as ever. I could hardly bear to think so: it would be hid or defaced to me as 'in a phantasma or a hideous dream.' I must turn my thoughts from it, or they would lead to madness! The copy went on better afterwards, and the affair ended less tragically than I apprehended. I did not cut a hole in the canvas, or commit any other extravagance: it is now hanging up very quietly facing me; and I have considerable satisfaction in occasionally looking at it, as I write this paragraph.

Such are the agonies into which we throw ourselves about trifles—our rage and disappointment at want of success in any favourite pursuit, and, our neglect of the means to ensure it. A Frenchman, under the penalty of half the chagrin at failure, would take just twice the pains and consideration to avoid it: but our morbid eagerness and blundering impetuosity, together with a certain *concreteness* of imagination which prevents our dividing any operation into steps and stages, defeat the very end we have in view. The worst of these wilful mischiefs of our own making is, that they admit of no relief or intermission. Natural calamities or great griefs, as we do not bring them upon ourselves, so they find a seasonable respite in tears or resignation, or in some alleviating contrast or reflection: but pride scorns all alliance with natural frailty or indulgence; our wilful purposes regard every relaxation or moment's ease as a compromise of their very essence, which consists in violence and effort: they turn away from whatever might afford diversion or solace, and goad us on to exertions as painful as they are unavailable, and with no other companion than remorse,—the most intolerable of all inmates of the breast; for it is constantly urging us to retrieve our peace of mind by an impossibility —the undoing of what is past. One of the chief traits of sublimity in Milton's character of Satan is this dreadful display of unrelenting pride and self-will—the sense of suffering joined with the sense of power and 'courage never to submit or yield'—and the aggravation of the original purpose of lofty ambition and opposition to the Almighty, with the total overthrow and signal punishment,—which

ought to be reasons for its relinquishment. 'His thoughts burn like a hell within him!' but he gives them 'neither truce nor rest,' and will not even sue for mercy. This kind of sublimity must be thrown away upon the French critic, who would only think Satan a very ridiculous old gentleman for adhering so obstinately to his original pretensions, and not making the most of circumstances, and giving in his resignation to the ruling party! When Buonaparte fell, an English editor (of virulent memory) exhausted a great number of the finest passages in *Paradise Lost*, in applying them to his ill-fated ambition. This was an equal compliment to the poet and the conqueror: to the last, for having realized a conception of himself in the mind of his enemies on a par with the most stupendous creations of imagination; to the first, for having embodied in fiction what bore so strong a resemblance to, and was constantly brought to mind by, the fearful and imposing reality! But to return to our subject.

It is the same with us in love and literature. An Englishman makes love without thinking of the chances of success, his own disadvantages, or the character of his mistress—that is, without the adaptation of means to ends, consulting only his own humour or fancy;[1] and he writes a book of history or travels, without acquainting himself with geography, or appealing to documents or dates; substituting his own will or opinion in the room of these technical helps or hindrances, as he considers them. It is not right. In business it is not by any means the same; which looks as if, where interest was the moving principle, and acted as a counterpoise to caprice and will, our headstrong propensity gave way, though it sometimes leads us into extravagant and ruinous speculations. Nor is it a disadvantage to us in war; for there the spirit of contradiction does every thing, and an Englishman will go to the devil sooner than yield to any odds. Courage is nothing but will, defying consequences; and this the English have in perfection. Burns somewhere calls out lustily, inspired by rhyme and *usquebaugh*,—

[1] Dr. Johnson has observed, that 'strong passion deprives the lover of that easiness of address, which is so great a recommendation to most women.' Is then indifference or coldness the surest passport to the female heart? A man who is much in love has not his wits properly about him: he can think only of her whose image is engraven on his heart; he can talk only of her; he can only repeat the same vows, and protestations, and expressions of rapture or despair. He may, by this means, become importunate and troublesome—but does he deserve to lose his mistress for the only cause that gives him a title to her—the sincerity of his passion? We may perhaps answer this question by another—Is a woman to accept of a madman, merely because he happens to fall in love with her? 'The lunatic, the lover and the poet,' as Shakspeare has said, 'are of imagination all compact,' and must, in most cases, be contented with imagination as their reward. Realities are out of their reach, as well as beneath their notice.

'Set but a Scotsman on a hill;
Say such is royal George's will,
And there 's the foe:—
His only thought is how to kill
Twa at a blow.'

I apprehend, with his own countrymen or ours, all the love and loyalty would come to little, but for their hatred of the army opposed to them. It is the resistance, 'the two to kill at a blow,' that is the charm, and makes our fingers'-ends tingle. The Greek cause makes no progress with us for this reason: it is one of pure sympathy, but our sympathies must arise out of our antipathies; they were devoted to the Queen to spite the King. We had a wonderful affection for the Spaniards—the secret of which was that we detested the French. Our love must begin with hate. It is so far well that the French are opposed to us in almost every way; for the spirit of contradiction alone to foreign fopperies and absurdities keeps us within some bounds of decency and order. When an English lady of quality introduces a favourite by saying, 'This is his lordship's physician, and my atheist,' the humour might become epidemic; but we can stop it at once by saying, 'That is so like a Frenchwoman!'—The English excel in the practical and mechanic arts, where mere plodding and industry are expected and required; but they do not combine business and pleasure well together. Thus, in the Fine Arts, which unite the mechanical with the sentimental, they will probably never succeed; for the one spoils and diverts them from the other. An Englishman can attend but to one thing at a time. He hates music at dinner. He can go through any labour or pain with prodigious fortitude; but he cannot make a pleasure of it, or persuade himself he is doing a *fine thing*, when he is not. Again, they are great in original discoveries, which come upon them by surprise, and which they leave to others to perfect. It is a question whether, if they foresaw they were about to make the discovery, at the very point of projection as it were, they would not turn their backs upon it, and leave it to shift for itself; or obstinately refuse to take the last step, or give up the pursuit, in mere dread and nervous apprehension lest they should not succeed. Poetry is also their undeniable element; for the essence of poetry is will and passion, 'and it alone is highly fantastical.' French poetry is *verbiage* or dry detail.

I have thus endeavoured to shew why it is the English fail as a people in the Fine Arts, because the idea of the end absorbs that of the means. Hogarth was an exception to this rule; but then every stroke of his pencil was instinct with genius. As it has been well said, that 'we *read* his works,' so it might be said he *wrote* them. Barry is an

instance more to my purpose. No one could argue better about *gusto* in painting, and yet no one ever painted with less. His pictures were dry, coarse, and wanted all that his descriptions of those of others indicate. For example, he speaks of 'the dull, dead, watery look' of the Medusa's head of Leonardo, in a manner that conveys an absolute idea of the character: had he copied it, you would never have suspected any thing of the kind. His pen grows almost wanton in praise of Titian's nymph-like figures. What *drabs* he has made of his own sea-nymphs, floating in the Thames, with Dr. Burney at their head, with his wig on! He is like a person admiring the grace of an accomplished rope-dancer; place him on the rope himself, and his head turns;—or he is like Luther's comparison of Reason to a drunken man on horseback—'set him up on one side, and he tumbles over on the other.' Why is this? His mind was essentially ardent and discursive, not sensitive or observant; and though the immediate object acted as a stimulus to his imagination, it was only as it does to the poet's—that is, as a link in the chain of association, as implying other strong feelings and ideas, and not for its intrinsic beauty or individual details. He had not the painter's eye, though he had the painter's general knowledge. There is as great a difference in this respect between our views of things as between the telescope and microscope. People in general see objects only to distinguish them in practice and by name—to know that a hat is black, that a chair is not a table, that John is not James; and there are painters, particularly of history in England, who look very little farther. They cannot finish any thing, or go over a head twice: the first *coup-d'œil* is all they ever arrive at, nor can they refine on their impressions, soften them down, or reduce them to their component parts, without losing their spirit. The inevitable result of this is grossness, and also want of force and solidity; for, in reality, the parts cannot be separated without injury from the whole. Such people have no pleasure in the art as such: it is merely to astonish or to thrive that they follow it; or, if thrown out of it by accident, they regret it only as a bankrupt tradesman does a business which was a handsome subsistence to him. Barry did not live, like Titian, on the taste of colours (there was here, perhaps—and I will not disguise it—in English painters in general, a defect of organic susceptibility); they were not a *pabulum* to his senses; he did not hold green, blue, red, and yellow for 'the darlings of his precious eye.' They did not, therefore, sink into his mind with all their hidden harmonies, nor nourish and enrich it with material beauty, though he knew enough of them to furnish hints for other ideas and to suggest topics of discourse. If he had had the most enchanting object in nature before him in his painting-room at the Adelphi, he

would have turned from it, after a moment's burst of admiration, to talk of the subject of his next composition, and to scrawl in some new and vast design, illustrating a series of great events in history, or some vague moral theory. The art itself was nothing to him, though he made it the stalking-horse to his ambition and display of intellectual power in general; and, therefore, he neglected its essential qualities to daub in huge allegories, or carry on cabals with the Academy, in which the violence of his will and the extent of his views found proper food and scope. As a painter, he was tolerable merely as a draftsman, or in that part of the art which may be best reduced to rules and precepts, or to positive measurements. There is neither colouring, nor expression, nor delicacy, nor striking effect in his pictures at the Adelphi. The group of youths and horses, in the representation of the Olympic Games, is the best part of them, and has more of the grace and spirit of a Greek bas-relief than any thing of the same kind in the French school of painting. Barry was, all his life, a thorn in the side of Sir Joshua, who was irritated by the temper and disconcerted by the powers of the man; and who, conscious of his own superiority in the exercise of his profession, yet looked askance at Barry's loftier pretensions and more gigantic scale of art. But he had no more occasion to be really jealous of him than of an Irish porter or orator. It was like Imogen's mistaking the dead body of Cloten for her lord's—'the jovial thigh, the brawns of Hercules': the head, which would have detected the cheat, was missing!

I might have gone more into the subject of our apparent indifference to the pleasure of mere imitation, if I had had to run a parallel between English and Italian or even Flemish art; but really, though I find a great deal of what is finical, I find nothing of the pleasurable in the details of French more than of English art. The English artist, it is an old and just complaint, can with difficulty be prevailed upon to finish any part of a picture but the face, even if he does that any tolerable justice: the French artist bestows equal and elaborate pains on every part of his picture—the dress, the carpet, &c.; and it has been objected to the latter method, that it has the effect of making the face look unfinished; for as this is variable and in motion, it can never admit of the same minuteness of imitation as objects of *still life*, and must suffer in the comparison, if these have the utmost possible degree of attention bestowed on them, and do not fall into their relative place in the composition from their natural insignificance. But does not this distinction shew generally that the English have no pleasure in art, unless there is an additional interest beyond what is borrowed from the eye, and that the French have the same pleasure in it, provided the mechanical operation is the same—

like the fly that settles equally on the face or dress, and runs over the whole surface with the same lightness and indifference? The collar of a coat is out of drawing: this may be and is wrong. But I cannot say that it gives me the same disturbance as if the nose was awry. A Frenchman thinks that both are equally out of drawing, and sets about correcting them both with equal gravity and perseverance. A part of the back-ground of a picture is left in an unfinished state: this is a sad eye-sore to the French artist or connoisseur. We English care little about it: if the head and character are well given, we pass it over as of small consequence; and if they are failures, it is of even less. A French painter, after having made you look like a baboon, would go on finishing the cravat or the buttons of your coat with all the nicety of a man milliner or button-maker, and the most perfect satisfaction with himself and his art. This with us would be quite impossible. 'They are careful after many things: with us, there is one thing needful'—which is effect. We certainly throw our impressions more into masses (they are not taken off by pattern, every part alike): there may be a slowness and repugnance at first; but, afterwards, there is an impulse, a *momentum* acquired—one interest absorbing and being strengthened by several others; and if we gain our principal object, we can overlook the rest, or at least cannot find time to attend to them till we have secured this. We have nothing of the *petit-maître*, of the *martinet* style about us: we run into the opposite fault. If we had time, if we had power, there could be no objection to giving every part with the utmost perfection, as it is given in a looking-glass. But if we have only a month to do a portrait in, is it not better to give three weeks to the face and one to the dress, than one week to the face and three to the dress. How often do we look at the face compared to the dress? 'On a good foundation,' says Sancho Panza, 'a good house may be built'; so a good picture should have a good back-ground, and be finished in every part. It is entitled to this mark of respect, which is like providing a frame for it, and hanging it in a good light. I can easily understand how Rubens or Vandyke finished the back grounds and drapery of their pictures:—they were worth the trouble; and, besides, it cost them nothing. It was to them no more than blowing a bubble in the air. One would no doubt have every thing right—a feather in a cap, or a plant in the fore-ground—if a thought or a touch would do it. But to labour on for ever, and labour to no purpose, is beyond mortal or English patience. Our clumsiness is one cause of our negligence. Depend upon it, people do with readiness what they can do well. I rather wonder, therefore, that Raphael took such pains in finishing his draperies and back-grounds, which he did so indifferently. The

expression is like an emanation of the soul, or like a lamp shining within and illuminating the whole face and body; and every part, charged with so sacred a trust as the conveying of this expression (even to the hands and feet), would be wrought up to the highest perfection. But his inanimate objects must have cost him some trouble; and yet he laboured them too. In what he could not do well, he was still determined to do his best; and that nothing should be wanting in decorum and respect to an art that he had consecrated to virtue, and to that genius that burnt like a flame upon its altars! We have nothing that for myself I can compare with this high and heroic pursuit of art for its own sake. The French fancy their own pedantic abortions equal to it, thrust them into the Louvre, 'and with their darkness dare affront that light!'—thus proving themselves without the germ or the possibility of excellence—the feeling of it in others. We at least claim some interest in art, by looking up to its loftiest monuments—retire to a distance, and reverence the sanctuary, if we cannot enter it.

'They also serve who only stare and wait.'[1]

## ON PERSONAL IDENTITY

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'Ha! here be three of us sophisticated.'—LEAR.

'If I were not Alexander, I would be Diogenes!' said the Macedonian hero; and the cynic might have retorted the compliment upon

[1] Zoffani, a foreign artist, but who, by long residence in England, had got our habits of indolence and dilatoriness, was employed by the late King, who was fond of low comedy, to paint a scene for Reynolds's *Speculation*; in which Quick, Munden, and Miss Wallis were introduced. The King called to see it in its progress; and at last it was done—'*all but the coat.*' The picture, however, was not sent; and the King repeated his visit to the artist. Zoffani with some embarassment said, 'It was done all but the *goat.*'—'Don't tell me,' said the impatient monarch; 'this is always the way: you said it was done all but the coat the last time I was here.'—'I said the *goat*, and please your Majesty.'—'Aye' replied the King, 'the *goat* or the *coat*, I care not which you call it; I say I will not have the picture,'—and was going to leave the room, when Zoffani, in an agony, repeated, 'It is the *goat* that is not finished,'—pointing to a picture of a goat that was hung up in a frame as an ornament to the scene at the theatre. The King laughed heartily at the blunder, and waited patiently till the goat was finished. Zoffani, like other idle people, was careless and extravagant. He made a fortune wehn he first came over here, which he soon spent: he then went out to India, where he made another, with which he returned to England, and spent also. He was an excellent theatrical portrait-painter, and has left delineations of celebrated actors and interesting situations, which revive the dead, and bring the scene before us.

the prince by saying, that, 'were he not Diogenes, he would be Alexander!' This is the universal exception, the invariable reservation that our self-love makes, the utmost point at which our admiration or envy ever arrives—to wish, if we were not ourselves, to be some other individual. No one ever wishes to be another, *instead* of himself. We may feel a desire to change places with others—to have one man's fortune—another's health or strength—his wit or learning, or accomplishments of various kinds—

> 'Wishing to be like one more rich in hope,
> Featured like him, like him with friends possessed,
> Desiring this man's art, and that man's scope:'

but we would still be our selves, to possess and enjoy all these, or we would not give a doit for them. But, on this supposition, what in truth should we be the better for them? It is not we, but another, that would reap the benefit; and what do we care about that other? In that case, the present owner might as well continue to enjoy them. *We* should not be gainers by the change. If the meanest beggar who crouches at a palace-gate, and looks up with awe and suppliant fear to the proud inmate as he passes, could be put in possession of all the finery, the pomp, the luxury, and wealth that he sees and envies on the sole condition of getting rid, together with his rags and misery, of all recollection that there ever was such a wretch as himself, he would reject the proffered boon with scorn. He might be glad to change situations; but he would insist on keeping his own thoughts, to *compare notes*, and point the transition by the force of contrast. He would not, on any account, forego his self-congratulation on the unexpected accession of good fortune, and his escape from past suffering. All that excites his cupidity, his envy, his repining or despair, is the alternative of some great good to himself; and if, in order to attain that object, he is to part with his own existence to take that of another, he can feel no farther interest in it. This is the language both of passion and reason.

Here lies 'the rub that makes calamity of so long life:' for it is not barely the apprehension of the ills that 'in that sleep of death may come,' but also our ignorance and indifference to the promised good, that produces our repugnance and backwardness to quit the present scene. No man, if he had his choice, would be the angel Gabriel to-morrow! What is the angel Gabriel to him but a splendid vision? He might as well have an ambition to be turned into a bright cloud, or a particular star. The interpretation of which is, he can have no sympathy with the angel Gabriel. Before he can be transformed into so bright and ethereal an essence, he must necessarily 'put off this mortal coil'—be divested of all his old habits, passions, thoughts,

and feelings—to be endowed with other lofty and beatific attributes, of which he has no notion; and, therefore, he would rather remain a little longer in this mansion of clay, which, with all its flaws, inconveniences, and perplexities, contains all that he has any real knowledge of, or any affection for. When, indeed, he is about to quit it in spite of himself, and has no other chance left to escape the darkness of the tomb, he may then have no objection (making a virtue of necessity) to put on angels' wings, to have radiant locks, to wear a wreath of amaranth, and thus to masquerade it in the skies.

It is an instance of the truth and beauty of the ancient mythology, that the various transmutations it recounts are never voluntary, or of favourable omen, but are interposed as a timely release to those who, driven on by fate, and urged to the last extremity of fear or anguish, are turned into a flower, a plant, an animal, a star, a precious stone, or into some object that may inspire pity or mitigate our regret for their misfortunes. Narcissus was transformed into a flower; Daphne into a laurel; Arethusa into a fountain (by the favour of the gods)—but not till no other remedy was left for their despair. It is a sort of smiling cheat upon death, and graceful compromise with annihilation. It is better to exist by proxy, in some softened type and soothing allegory, than not at all—to breathe in a flower or shine in a constellation, than to be utterly forgot; but no one would change his natural condition (if he could help it) for that of a bird, an insect, a beast, or a fish, however delightful their mode of existence, or however enviable he might deem their lot compared to his own. Their thoughts are not our thoughts—their happiness is not our happiness; nor can we enter into it except with a passing smile of approbation, or as a refinement of fancy. As the poet sings:—

> 'What more felicity can fall to creature
> Than to enjoy delight with liberty,
> And to be lord of all the works of nature?
> To reign in the air from earth to highest sky;
> To feed on flowers and weeds of glorious feature;
> To taste whatever thing doth please the eye?—
> Who rests not pleased with such happiness,
> Well worthy he to taste of wretchedness!'

This is gorgeous description and fine declamation: yet who would be found to act upon it, even in the forming of a wish; or would not rather be the thrall of wretchedness, than launch out (by the aid of some magic spell) into all the delights of such a butterfly state of existence? The French (if any people can) may be said to enjoy this airy, heedless gaiety and unalloyed exuberance of satisfaction: yet

what Englishman would deliberately change with them? We would sooner be miserable after our own fashion than happy after their's. It is not happiness, then, in the abstract, which we seek, that can be addressed as

> 'That something still that prompts th' eternal sigh,
> For which we wish to live or dare to die,—'

but a happiness suited to our taste and faculties—that has become a part of ourselves, by habit and enjoyment—that is endeared to us by a thousand recollections, privations, and sufferings. No one, then, would willingly change his country or his kind for the most plausible pretences held out to him. The most humiliating punishment inflicted in ancient fable is the change of sex: not that it was any degradation in itself—but that it must occasion a total derangement of the moral economy and confusion of the sense of personal propriety. The thing is said to have happened, *au sens contraire*, in our time. The story is to be met with in 'very choice Italian'; and Lord D—— tells it in very plain English!

We may often find ourselves envying the possessions of others, and sometimes inadvertently indulging a wish to change places with them altogether; but our self-love soon discovers some excuse to be off the bargain we were ready to strike, and retracts 'vows made in haste, as violent and void.' We might make up our minds to the alteration in every other particular; but, when it comes to the point, there is sure to be some trait or feature of character in the object of our admiration to which we cannot reconcile ourselves—some favourite quality or darling foible of our own, with which we can by no means resolve to part. The more enviable the situation of another, the more entirely to our taste, the more reluctant we are to leave any part of ourselves behind that would be so fully capable of appreciating all the exquisiteness of its new situation, or not to enter into the possession of such an imaginary reversion of good fortune with all our previous inclinations and sentiments. The outward circumstances were fine: they only wanted a *soul* to enjoy them, and that soul is our's (as the costly ring wants the peerless jewel to perfect and set it off). The humble prayer and petition to sneak into visionary felicity by personal adoption, or the surrender of our own personal pretensions, always ends in a daring project of usurpation, aud a determination to expel the actual proprietor, and supply his place so much more worthily with our own identity—not bating a single jot of it. Thus, in passing through a fine collection of pictures, who has not envied the privilege of visiting it every day, and wished to be the owner? But the rising sigh is soon checked, and 'the native hue of emulation

is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought,' when we come to ask ourselves not merely whether the owner has any taste at all for these splendid works, and does not look upon them as so much expensive furniture, like his chairs and tables—but whether he has the same precise (and only true) taste that we have—whether he has the very same favourites that we have—whether he may not be so blind as to prefer a Vandyke to a Titian, a Ruysdael to a Claude;—nay, whether he may not have other pursuits and avocations that draw off his attention from the sole objects of our idolatry, and which seem to us mere impertinences and waste of time? In that case, we at once lose all patience, and exclaim indignantly, 'Give us back our taste and keep your pictures!' It is not we who should envy them the possession of the treasure, but they who should envy us the true and exclusive enjoyment of it. A similar train of feeling seems to have dictated Warton's spirited Sonnet on visiting Wilton-House:—

'From Pembroke's princely dome, where mimic art
Decks with a magic hand the dazzling bowers,
Its living hues where the warm pencil pours,
And breathing forms from the rude marble start,
How to life's humbler scene can I depart?
My breast all glowing from those gorgeous towers,
In my low cell how cheat the sullen hours?
Vain the complaint! For Fancy can impart
(To fate superior and to fortune's power)
Whate'er adorns the stately storied-hall:
She, mid the dungeon's solitary gloom,
Can dress the Graces in their attic pall;
Bid the green landskip's vernal beauty bloom;
And in bright trophies clothe the twilight wall.'

One sometimes passes by a gentleman's park, an old family-seat, with its moss-grown ruinous paling, its 'glades mild-opening to the genial day,' or embrowned with forest-trees. Here one would be glad to spend one's life, 'shut up in measureless content,' and to grow old beneath ancestral oaks, instead of gaining a precarious, irksome, and despised livelihood, by indulging romantic sentiments, and writing disjointed descriptions of them. The thought has scarcely risen to the lips, when we learn that the owner of so blissful a seclusion is a thorough-bred fox-hunter, a preserver of the game, a brawling electioneerer, a Tory member of parliament, a 'no-Popery' man!—'I'd sooner be a dog, and bay the moon!' Who would be Sir Thomas Lethbridge for his title and estate? asks one man. But would not almost any one wish to be Sir Francis Burdett, the man of the people, the idol of the electors of Westminster? says another. I

can only answer for myself. Respectable and honest as he is, there is something in his white boots, and white breeches, and white coat, and white hair, and red face, and white hat, that I cannot, by any effort of candour, confound my personal identity with! If Mr. Hobhouse can prevail on Sir Francis to exchange, let him do so by all means. Perhaps they might contrive to *club* a soul between them! Could I have had my will, I should have been born a lord: but one would not be a booby lord neither. I am haunted by an odd fancy of driving down the Great North Road in a chaise and four, about fifty years ago, and coming to the inn at Ferry-bridge, with out-riders, white favours, and a coronet on the panels; and then I choose my companion in the coach. Really there is a witchcraft in all this that makes it necessary to turn away from it, lest, in the conflict between imagination and impossibility, I should grow feverish and light-headed! But, on the other hand, if one was born a lord, should one have the same idea (that every one else has) of *a peeress in her own right?* Is not distance, giddy elevation, mysterious awe, an impassable gulf, necessary to form this idea in the mind, that fine ligament of 'ethereal braid, sky-woven,' that lets down heaven upon earth, fair as enchantment, soft as Berenice's hair, bright and garlanded like Ariadne's crown; and is it not better to have had this idea all through life—to have caught but glimpses of it, to have known it but in a dream—than to have been born a lord ten times over, with twenty pampered menials at one's back, and twenty descents to boast of? It is the envy of certain privileges, the sharp privations we have undergone, the cutting neglect we have met with from the want of birth or title, that gives its zest to the distinction: the thing itself may be indifferent or contemptible enough. It is the *becoming* a lord that is to be desired; but he who becomes a lord in reality is an upstart—a mere pretender, without the sterling essence; so that all that is of any worth in this supposed transition is purely imaginary and impossible. Had I been a lord, I should have married Miss ——, and my life would not have been one long-drawn sigh, made up of sweet and bitter regret![1] Had I been a lord, I would have been a Popish lord, and then I might also have been an honest man:—poor, and then I might have been proud and not vulgar! Kings are so accustomed to look down on all the rest of the world, that they consider the condition of mortality as vile and intolerable, if stripped of royal state, and cry out in the bitterness

[1] When Lord Byron was cut by the great, on account of his quarrel with his wife, he stood leaning on a marble slab at the entrance of a room, while troops of duchesses and countesses passed out. One little, pert, red-haired girl staid a few paces behind the rest; and, as she passed him, said with a nod, 'Aye, you should have married me, and then all this wouldn't have happened to you!'

of their despair, 'Give me a crown, or a tomb!' It should seem from this as if all mankind would change with the first crowned head that could propose the alternative, or that it would be only the presumption of the supposition, or a sense of their own unworthiness, that would deter them. Perhaps there is not a single throne that, if it was to be filled by this sort of voluntary metempsychosis, would not remain empty. Many would, no doubt, be glad to 'monarchise, be feared, and kill with looks' in their own persons and after their own fashion: but who would be the *double* of ——, or of those shadows of a shade—those 'tenth transmitters of a foolish face'—Charles x. and Ferdinand vii.? If monarchs have little sympathy with mankind, mankind have even less with monarchs. They are merely to us a sort of state-puppets or royal wax-work, which we may gaze at with superstitious wonder, but have no wish to become; and he who should meditate such a change must not only feel by anticipation an utter contempt for the *slough* of humanity which he is prepared to cast, but must feel an absolute void and want of attraction in those lofty and incomprehensible sentiments which are to supply its place. With respect to actual royalty, the spell is in a great measure broken. But, among ancient monarchs, there is no one, I think, who envies Darius or Xerxes. One has a different feeling with respect to Alexander or Pyrrhus; but this is because they were great men as well as great kings, and the soul is up in arms at the mention of their names as at the sound of a trumpet. But as to all the rest—those 'in the catalogue who go for kings'—the praying, eating, drinking, dressing monarchs of the earth, in time past or present—one would as soon think of wishing to personate the Golden Calf, or to turn out with Nebuchadnezzar to graze, as to be transformed into one of that 'swinish multitude.' There is no point of affinity. The extrinsic circumstances are imposing: but, within, there is nothing but morbid humours and proud flesh! Some persons might vote for Charlemagne; and there are others who would have no objection to be the modern Charlemagne, with all he inflicted and suffered, even after the necromantic field of Waterloo, and the bloody wreath on the vacant brow of his conqueror, and that fell jailer set over him by a craven foe, that 'glared round his soul, and mocked his closing eyelids!'

It has been remarked, that could we at pleasure change our situation in life, more persons would be found anxious to descend than to ascend in the scale of society. One reason may be, that we have it more in our power to do so; and this encourages the thought, and makes it familiar to us. A second is, that we naturally wish to throw off the cares of state, of fortune or business, that oppress us, and to seek repose before we find it in the grave. A third reason is,

that, as we descend to common life, the pleasures are simple, natural, such as all can enter into, and therefore excite a general interest, and combine all suffrages. Of the different occupations of life, none is beheld with a more pleasing emotion, or less aversion to a change of our own, than that of a shepherd tending his flock: the pastoral ages have been the envy and the theme of all succeeding ones; and a beggar with his crutch is more closely allied than the monarch and his crown to the associations of mirth and heart's-ease. On the other hand, it must be admitted that our pride is too apt to prefer grandeur to happiness; and that our passions make us envy great vices oftener than great virtues.

The world shew their sense in nothing more than in a distrust and aversion to those changes of situation which only tend to make the successful candidates ridiculous, and which do not carry along with them a mind adequate to the circumstances. The common people, in this respect, are more shrewd and judicious than their superiors, from feeling their own awkwardness and incapacity, and often decline, with an instinctive modesty, the troublesome honours intended for them. They do not overlook their original defects so readily as others overlook their acquired advantages. It is wonderful, therefore, that opera-singers and dancers refuse, or only *condescend* as it were, to accept lords, though the latter are so often fascinated by them. The fair performer knows (better than her unsuspecting admirer) how little connection there is between the dazzling figure she makes on the stage and that which she may make in private life, and is in no hurry to convert 'the drawing-room into a Green-room.' The nobleman (supposing him not to be very wise) is astonished at the miraculous powers of art in

'The fair, the chaste, the inexpressive *she*;'

and thinks such a paragon must easily conform to the routine of manners and society which every trifling woman of quality of his acquaintance, from sixteen to sixty, goes through without effort. This is a hasty or a wilful conclusion. Things of habit only come by habit, and inspiration here avails nothing. A man of fortune who marries an actress for her fine performance of tragedy, has been well compared to the person who bought Punch. The lady is not unfrequently aware of the inconsequentiality, and unwilling to be put on the shelf, and hid in the nursery of some musty country-mansion. Servant girls, of any sense and spirit, treat their masters (who make serious love to them) with suitable contempt. What is it but a proposal to drag an unmeaning trollop at his heels through life, to her own annoyance and the ridicule of all his friends? No woman,

I suspect, ever forgave a man who raised her from a low condition in life (it is a perpetual obligation and reproach); though, I believe, men often feel the most disinterested regard for women under such circumstances. Sancho Panza discovered no less folly in his eagerness to enter upon his new government, than wisdom in quitting it as fast as possible. Why will Mr. Cobbett persist in getting into Parliament? He would find himself no longer the same man. What member of Parliament, I should like to know, could write his Register? As a popular partisan, he may (for aught I can say) be a match for the whole Honourable House; but, by obtaining a seat in St. Stephen's Chapel, he would only be equal to a 576th part of it. It was surely a puerile ambition in Mr. Addington to succeed Mr. Pitt as prime-minister. The situation was only a foil to his imbecility. Gipsies have a fine faculty of evasion: catch them who can in the same place or story twice! Take them; teach them the comforts of civilization; confine them in warm rooms, with thick carpets and down beds; and they will fly out of the window—like the bird, described by Chaucer, out of its golden cage. I maintain that there is no common language or medium of understanding between people of education and without it—between those who judge of things from books or from their senses. Ignorance has so far the advantage over learning; for it can make an appeal to you from what you know; but you cannot re-act upon it through that which it is a perfect stranger to. Ignorance is, therefore, power. This is what foiled Buonaparte in Spain and Russia. The people can only be gained over by informing them, though they may be enslaved by fraud or force. You say there is a common language in nature. They see nature through their wants, while you look at it for your pleasure. Ask a country lad if he does not like to hear the birds sing in the spring? And he will laugh in your face. 'What is it, then, he does like?'—'Good victuals and drink!' As if you had not these too; but because he has them not, he thinks of nothing else, and laughs at you and your refinements, supposing you to live upon air. To those who are deprived of every other advantage, even nature is a *book sealed*. I have made this capital mistake all my life, in imagining that those objects which lay open to all, and excited an interest merely from the *idea* of them, spoke a common language to all; and that nature was a kind of universal home, where all ages, sexes, classes met. Not so. The vital air, the sky, the woods, the streams—all these go for nothing, except with a favoured few. The poor are taken up with their bodily wants—the rich, with external acquisitions: the one, with the sense of property—the other, of its privation. Both have the same distaste for *sentiment*. The

*genteel* are the slaves of appearances—the vulgar, of necessity; and neither has the smallest regard to true worth, refinement, generosity. All savages are irreclaimable. I can understand the Irish character better than the Scotch. I hate the formal crust of circumstances and the mechanism of society. I have been recommended, indeed, to settle down into some respectable profession for life:—

'Ah! why so soon the blossom tear?'

I am 'in no haste to be venerable!'

In thinking of those one might wish to have been, many people will exclaim, 'Surely, you would like to have been Shakspeare?' Would Garrick have consented to the change? No, nor should he; for the applause which he received, and on which he lived, was more adapted to his genius and taste. If Garrick had agreed to be Shakspeare, he would have made it a previous condition that he was to be a better player. He would have insisted on taking some higher part than *Polonius* or the *Grave-digger*. Ben Jonson and his companions at the Mermaid would not have known their old friend Will in his new disguise. The modern Roscius would have scouted the halting player. He would have shrunk from the parts of the inspired poet. If others were unlike us, we feel it as a presumption and an impertinence to usurp their place; if they were like us, it seems a work of supererogation. We are not to be cozened out of our existence for nothing. It has been ingeniously urged, as an objection to having been Milton, that 'then we should not have had the pleasure of reading Paradise Lost.' Perhaps I should incline to draw lots with Pope, but that he was deformed, and did not sufficiently relish Milton and Shakspeare. As it is, we can enjoy his verses and their's too. Why, having these, need we ever be dissatisfied with ourselves? Goldsmith is a person whom I considerably affect, notwithstanding his blunders and his misfortunes. The author of the *Vicar of Wakefield*, and of *Retaliation*, is one whose temper must have had something eminently amiable, delightful, gay, and happy in it.

'A certain tender bloom his fame o'erspreads.'

But then I could never make up my mind to his preferring Rowe and Dryden to the worthies of the Elizabethan age; nor could I, in like manner, forgive Sir Joshua—whom I number among those whose existence was marked with a *white stone*, and on whose tomb might be inscribed 'Thrice Fortunate!'—his treating Nicholas Poussin with contempt. Differences in matters of taste and opinion

are points of honour—'stuff o' the conscience'—stumbling-blocks not to be got over. Others, we easily grant, may have more wit, learning, imagination, riches, strength, beauty, which we should be glad to borrow of them; but that they have sounder or better views of things, or that we should act wisely in changing in this respect, is what we can by no means persuade ourselves. We may not be the lucky possessors of what is best or most desirable; but our notion of what is best and most desirable we will give up to no man by choice or compulsion; and unless others (the greatest wits or brightest geniuses) can come into our way of thinking, we must humbly beg leave to remain as we are. A Calvinistic preacher would not relinquish a single point of faith to be the Pope of Rome; nor would a strict Unitarian acknowledge the mystery of the Holy Trinity to have painted Raphael's *Assembly of the Just*. In the range of *ideal* excellence, we are distracted by variety and repelled by differences: the imagination is fickle and fastidious, and requires a combination of all possible qualifications, which never met. Habit alone is blind and tenacious of the most homely advantages; and after running the tempting round of nature, fame, and fortune, we wrap ourselves up in our familiar recollections and humble pretensions—as the lark, after long fluttering on sunny wing, sinks into its lowly bed!

We can have no very importunate craving, nor very great confidence, in wishing to change characters, except with those with whom we are intimately acquainted by their works; and having these by us (which is all we know or covet in them), what would we have more? We can have *no more of a cat than her skin*; nor of an author than his brains. By becoming Shakspeare in reality, we cut ourselves out of reading Milton, Pope, Dryden, and a thousand more—all of whom we have in our possession, enjoy, and *are*, by turns, in the best part of them, their thoughts, without any metamorphosis or miracle at all. What a microcosm is our's! What a Proteus is the human mind! All that we know, think of, or can admire, in a manner becomes ourselves. We are not (the meanest of us) a volume, but a whole library! In this calculation of problematical contingencies, the lapse of time makes no difference. One would as soon have been Raphael as any modern artist. Twenty, thirty, or forty years of elegant enjoyment and lofty feeling were as great a luxury in the fifteenth as in the nineteenth century. But Raphael did not live to see Claude, nor Titian Rembrandt. Those who found arts and sciences are not witnesses of their accumulated results and benefits; nor in general do they reap the meed of praise which is their due. We who come after in some 'laggard age,'

have more enjoyment of their fame than they had. Who would have missed the sight of the Louvre in all its glory to have been one of those whose works enriched it? Would it not have been giving a certain good for an uncertain advantage? No: I am as sure (if it is not presumption to say so) of what passed through Raphael's mind as of what passes through my own; and I know the difference between seeing (though even that is a rare privilege) and producing such perfection. At one time I was so devoted to Rembrandt, that I think, if the Prince of Darkness had made me the offer in some rash mood, I should have been tempted to close with it, and should have become (in happy hour, and in downright earnest) the great master of light and shade!

I have run myself out of my materials for this Essay, and want a well-turned sentence or two to conclude with; like Benvenuto Cellini, who complains that, with all the brass, tin, iron, and lead he could muster in the house, his statue of Perseus was left imperfect, with a dent in the heel of it. Once more then—I believe there is one character that all the world would be glad to change with—which is that of a favoured rival. Even hatred gives way to envy. We would be any thing—a toad in a dungeon—to live upon her smile, which is our all of earthly hope and happiness; nor can we, in our infatuation, conceive that there is any difference of feeling on the subject, or that the pressure of her hand is not in itself divine, making those to whom such bliss is deigned like the Immortal Gods!

## APHORISMS ON MAN

*The Monthly Magazine.*] [*October*, 1830—*June*, 1831.

### I

Servility is a sort of bastard envy. We heap our whole stock of involuntary adulation on a single prominent figure, to have an excuse for withdrawing our notice from all other claims (perhaps juster and more galling ones), and in the hope of sharing a part of the applause as train-bearers.

### II

Admiration is catching by a certain sympathy. The vain admire the vain; the morose are pleased with the morose; nay, the selfish and cunning are charmed with the tricks and meanness of which they are witnesses, and may be in turn the dupes.

III

Vanity is no proof of conceit. A vain man often accepts of praise as a cheap substitute for his own good opinion. He may think more highly of another, though he would be wounded to the quick if his own circle thought so. He knows the worthlessness and hollowness of the flattery to which he is accustomed, but his ear is tickled with the sound; and the effeminate in this way can no more live without the incense of applause, than the effeminate in another can live without perfumes or any other customary indulgence of the senses. Such people would rather have the applause of fools than the approbation of the wise. It is a low and shallow ambition.

IV

It was said of some one who had contrived to make himself popular abroad by getting into *hot water*, but who proved very troublesome and ungrateful when he came home—'We thought him a very persecuted man in India'—the proper answer to which is, that there are some people who are good for nothing else but to be persecuted. They want some check to keep them in order.

V

It is a sort of gratuitous error in high life, that the poor are naturally thieves and beggars, just as the latter conceive that the rich are naturally proud and hard-hearted. Give a man who is starving a thousand a-year, and he will be no longer under a temptation to get himself hanged by stealing a leg of mutton for his dinner; he may still spend it in gaming, drinking, and the other vices of a gentleman, and not in *charity*, about which he before made such an outcry.

VI

Do not confer benefits in the expectation of meeting with gratitude; and do not cease to confer them because you find those whom you have served ungrateful. Do what you think fit and right to please yourself; the generosity is not the less real, because it does not meet with a correspondent return. A man should study to get through the world as he gets through St. Giles's—with as little annoyance and interruption as possible from the shabbiness around him.

VII

*Common-place* advisers and men of the world, are always pestering you to conform to their maxims and modes, just like the *barkers* in Monmouth-street, who stop the passengers by entreating them to turn in and *refit* at their second-hand repositories.

## VIII

The word *gentility* is constantly in the mouths of vulgar people; as quacks and pretenders are always talking of *genius*. Those who possess any real excellence think and say the least about it.

## IX

Taste is often envy in disguise: it turns into the art of reducing excellence within the smallest possible compass, or of finding out the *minimum* of pleasure. Some people admire only what is new and fashionable—the work of the day, of some popular author—the last and frothiest bubble that glitters on the surface of fashion. All the rest is gone by, 'in the deep bosom of the ocean buried;' to allude to it is Gothic, to insist upon it odious. We have only to wait a week to be relieved of the hot-pressed page, of the vignette-title; and in the interim can look with sovereign contempt on the wide range of science, learning, art, and on those musty old writers who lived before the present age of novels. Peace be with their *manes*! There are others, on the contrary, to whom all the modern publications are anathema, a by-word—they get rid of this idle literature 'at one fell swoop'—disqualify the present race from all pretensions whatever, get into a corner with an obscure writer, and devour the cobwebs and the page together, and pick out in the quaintest production, the quaintest passages, the merest *choke-pear*, which they think nobody can swallow but themselves.

## X

The source of the love of nature or of the country has never been explained so well as it might. The truth is this. Natural or inanimate objects please merely as objects of sense or contemplation, and we ask no return of the passion or admiration from them, so that we cannot be disappointed or distracted in our choice. If we are delighted with a flower or a tree, we are pleased with it *for its own sake*; nothing more is required to make our satisfaction complete; we do not ask the flower or tree whether it likes us again; and, therefore, wherever we can meet with the same or a similar object, we may reckon upon a recurrence of the same soothing emotion. Nature is the only mistress that smiles on us still the same; and does not repay admiration with scorn, love with hatred. She is faithful to us, as long as we are faithful to ourselves. Whereas, in regard to the human species, we have not so much to consider our own dispositions towards others, as theirs towards us; a thousand caprices, interests, and opinions, may intervene before the good understanding can be

mutual; we not only cannot infer of one individual from another, but the same individual may change to-morrow: so that in our intercourse with the world, there is nothing but littleness, uncertainty, suspicion, and mortification, instead of the grandeur and repose of nature.

## XI

It has been objected to the soothing power of Nature, that it cannot take away the sharp pang of vehement distress, but rather barbs the dart, and seems to smile in mockery of our anguish. But the same might be said of music, poetry, and friendship, which only tantalize and torment us by offering to divert our grief in its keenest paroxysms; but yet cannot be denied to be enviable resources and consolations of the human mind, when the bitterness of the moment has passed over.

## XII

Every one is a hero, the circumstances being given. All that is necessary is, that the outward impression should be so strong as to make a man forget himself. A woman rushes into the flames to save her child, not from duty or reason—but because the distracting terror for another banishes all recollection of, and fear for, herself. For the same reason, a person throws himself from a precipice, because the apprehension of danger gets the better of and confounds the sense of self-preservation. The doctrine of self-love, as an infallible metaphysical principle of action, is nonsense.

## XIII

The heroical ages were those in which there was a constant question between life and death, and men ate their scanty meal with their swords in their hands.

## XIV

The hero acts from outward impulse; the martyr from internal faith, and so far is the greater character of the two. And yet it may be doubted whether the latter is properly a voluntary agent, or whether, if he could do it unperceived, he would not abstract himself from the scene, instead of becoming a sacrifice and a witness to the truth.

## XV

What shews that persecution and danger act as incentives rather than impediments to the will, is that zeal generally goes out with the fires that kindle it; and we become indifferent to a cause, when life,

property, and limb are no longer endangered. He is the real philosopher who loves truth for its own sake, not in the spirit of contradiction: he the genuine friend of freedom and justice, who hates oppression and wrong after they have ceased, and as long as the very name of them remains, as well as while it is a bone of contention between infuriated sects and parties.

## XVI

If reform were to gain the day, reform would become as vulgar as cant of any other kind. We only shew a spirit of independence and resistance to power, as long as power is against us. As soon as the cause of opposition prevails, its essence and character are gone out of it; and the most flagrant *radicalism* degenerates into the tamest servility. We then say as others say; sail with the stream; no longer sacrifice interest to principle, but are in a pitiful majority. Had events taken a different turn in 1794, who can predict what the popular cry would have been? This may point out how little chance there is of any great improvement in the affairs of the world. Virtue ceases with difficulty; honesty is *militant*. The mass of mankind, who are governed by indolence and habit, fall in with existing events and interests; the imaginative and reasoning part fall out with facts and reality; but could they have their way, and model the world at their pleasure, their occupation would be gone; or if all governments were wise and good, the character of the patriot would become obsolete, and a sinecure. At present there is a very convenient division of labour; and each class fulfils its vocation. It is essential to the triumph of reform that it should never succeed.

## XVII

We talk about the cant of politics or religion, as if there were no cant but that which is common to the multitude. But whenever any two individuals agree about any one thing, they begin to cant about it, and take the echo of one another's voices for the verdict of truth. Half-a-dozen persons will always make a *quorum* of credulity and vulgarity.

## XVIII

When people have done quarrelling about one set of questions they start another. Motion is necessary to mind as much as to matter; and for 'an ultimate end,' Hobbes denies that there is any such thing. Hence the tendency to all Ultra opinions and measures! Man is seldom contented to go as far as others, unless he can go beyond them, and make a caricature and a paradox even of the most vulgar prejudice.

It is necessary to aim at some kind of distinction—to create some difficulty, were it only for the sake of overcoming it. Thus we find that O'Connell, having carried his cause, would not let the 'agitation' subside without turning it into a personal quarrel: the way was opened to him into the House, and he wanted to force his way there by an *ex post facto* inference; the banns of marriage were published between him and parliament, and he would fain, with the petulance of opposition, *seize* a seat there.

## XIX

Truth itself becomes but a fashion. When all the world acknowledge it, it seems trite and stale. It is tinged by the coarse medium through which it passes.

## XX

Erasmus, in his 'Remains,' tells a story of two thieves, who were recommended by their mother to rob every one they met with; but warned, on peril of their lives, to avoid one *Black-breeches* (Hercules). Meeting him, however, without knowing him, they set upon him, and were slung across his shoulder,—where Hercules heard them muttering behind his back, *a long way off*, 'This must surely be he that our mother warned us of.' In contempt and pity he let them escape. What modern wit can come up to the grotesque grandeur of this invention?

## XXI

People addicted to secresy are so without knowing why; they are so not 'for cause,' but for secresy's sake. It is a mixture of cowardice and conceit. They think, if they tell you any thing, you may understand it better than they do, or turn it in some way against them; but that while they shut up their mouths they are wiser than you, just as liars think by telling you a falsehood they have an advantage over you. There are others who deal in significant nods, smiles, and half-sentences, so that you never can get at their meaning, and indeed they have none, but leave it to you to put what interpretation you please on their embryo hints and conceptions. They are glad to find a *proxy* for their want of understanding.

## XXII

It is the force and violence of the English mind that has put it into the safe custody of the law, and it is every man's disposition to act upon his own judgment and presumption, without regard to others, that has made it absolutely necessary to establish equal claims to curb

them. We are too much in a state of nature to submit to what Burke calls 'the soft collar of social esteem,' and require 'the iron rod, the torturing hour,' to tame us. But though the foundations of liberty, life, and property, are formally secured in this way from the ebullitions of national character, yet the spirit breaks out upon the surface of manners, and is often spurted in our face. Lord Castlereagh was wrong in saying that 'liberty was merely a custom of England;' it is the indigenous growth of our temper and our clime; and woe to him who deprives us of the only amends for so many disadvantages and failings! The wild beast roaming his native forests is respectable though formidable—shut up in Exeter 'Change, he is equally odious and wretched.

## XXIII

It was a long time made an argument for not throwing open the galleries of noblemen and others to the public, that if permission were given they would be filled with the lowest of the rabble, and with squalid wretches, who would run up against well-dressed people, and damage the works of art. Nothing could be more false than this theory, as experience has shown. It was in vain to quote the example of foreign countries, as it was said the common people there were kept more in subjection; but if they are tamer, ours are prouder for that very reason. The National Gallery in Pall-Mall is now open to all the world; and, except a shabby artist or two, who ever saw a soul there who was not, if not well-dressed, yet dressed in his best, and behaving with decency, instead of trying to turn the place into a bear-garden, as had been predicted.[1] People will not go out of their way to see pictures unless they have an interest in them, which gives the title, and is a security against ill consequences; much less will any class of people obtrude themselves where they are pointed at as inferior to the rest of the company, or subject themselves to looks of scorn and disgust, to see any sights in the world. There is no man so poor or low but he loves himself better than pictures or statues; and if he must get snubbed and treated with contempt to indulge his admiration of celebrated works, he will forego the latter. *Comparisons are odious*; and we avoid them. The first object of every human being (high or low, great or small) is to stand well with himself, and to appear to the best advantage to others. A man is not very fond of passing along the streets in a thread-bare coat, and shoes with holes in them. Will he go in this trim into a group of well-dressed people

[1] If it were a show of wild-beasts, or a boxing-match, the reasoning might be somewhat different; though I do not know that it would. No people behave better than the *gods* after the play once begins.

to make himself ridiculous? The mind, so far from being dull or callous on this point, is but too sensitive; our jealousy of public opinion is the ruling passion, a morbid disease. Does not the consciousness of any singularity or impropriety of appearance immediately take off from our pleasure at a play? How seldom we observe an interloper in the dress circle; and how sure he is to pay for it! If a man has any defect or inferiority, this is certain, he will keep it in the back-ground. If a chimney-sweeper or scavenger had a ticket to a ball, would he go? Oh! no; it is enough to bear the sense of our own infirmity and disgrace in silence, and unnoticed, without having it wrought to agony by the glare of contrast and ostentation of insult! What linendraper or grocer's son would dine with a prince every day though he might, to be crushed into insignificance, and stifled with ironical civility? Do we not observe the difficulty there is in making servants and mechanics sit down, or keep on their hats in speaking to their *betters*, for fear of being thought to encroach, and made liable to a rebuff in consequence? Assuredly, then, the great may throw open their palace-doors and galleries of art without having to dread the inroad or outrages of the mob, or fancying that any one will go who is not qualified to appear, or will not come away with his mind and manners improved. The wooden shoes and mob caps in the Louvre or the Vatican do no harm to the pictures on the walls: but add a new interest to them, and throw a pleasing light on human nature. If we are behind other nations in politeness and civilization, the best way to overtake them is to tread in their steps.

## XXIV

It is at the same time true that *familiarity breeds contempt*; or that the vulgar, if admitted to an intimacy and footing of equality, try to make you feel all your defects, and to pay for the superiority you have so long usurped over them. The same pride that before kept them at a distance makes them ready to throw down any barrier of deference or distinction the moment they can do so with impunity. No one willingly admits a superiority in another; or does not secretly prefer himself to the whole universe beside. The slave would kill the tyrant, whose feet he kisses; and there is no Turk so loyal that he would not cut off the head of the best of Sultans, if he was sure of putting the diadem upon his own.

## XXV

The strongest minds are governed more by appearances than by a regard to consequences. Those who pretend to be the greatest calculators of their own interest, or the *main chance*, are the very slaves

of opinion, and dupes of shallow pretension. They are often so mad in this respect, that they think neither better nor worse of the oldest friend they have in the world than the first person they happen to be in company with does, or the last rumour they heard gives him out. Their *circumspection* amounts to looking three ways at once, and missing the right point of view at last. They would rather speak to a well-dressed fool in the street than to the wisest man in a thread-bare suit. I know an author who succeeds with a set of second-hand thoughts by having a coat of the newest cut; and an editor, who flourishes about the town in virtue of a pair of green spectacles. Lay out all you are worth in decking out the person of a vulgar woman, and she will *cut* you in the very finery you have given her; lay it out on your own back, and she will be ambitious of your least notice. People judge of you not from what *they* know, but from the impression you make on others, which depends chiefly on professions, and on outward bearing and bravery. *De non apparentibus et non existentibus eadem est ratio.* If a man has no opinion of himself, how the deuce should any one else? It is like electing a person member of parliament who refuses to come forward as a candidate. On the other hand, let a man have impudence in lieu of all other qualifications, and he needs not despair. The part of quack or coxcomb is a favourite one with the town. The only character that is likely to get on by passing for a *poor creature* is the legacy-hunter. Nothing can be too low or insignificant for that. A man is only grateful to you in the other world for having been a foil to him in this. A miser (if he could) would leave his fortune to his dog, that no human being might be the better for it, or no one that he could envy in the possession of it, or think raised to an equality with himself.

## XXVI

We complain of old friends who have made their fortunes in the world and slighted us in their prosperity, without considering those who have been unsuccessful, and whom we have neglected in our turn. When our friends betray or desert us, we cling the closer to those that remain. Our confidence is strengthened by being circumscribed; we do not wish to give up a forlorn hope. With the crumbling and decayed fragments of friendship around us, we maintain our point to the last; like the cobbler, who kept his stall and cooked his beef-steak in the ruins of Drury-lane. Buonparte used to speak of old generals and favourites who would not have abandoned him in his misfortunes if they had lived; it was perhaps well for them that they were dead. The list of traitors and the ungrateful is too much swelled without any probable additions to it.

## XXVII

When we hear of any base or shocking action or character, we think the better of ourselves; instead of which, we ought to think the worse. It strikes at the grounds of our faith in human nature. The reflection of the old divine was wiser on seeing a reprobate—'There goes my wicked self!'

## XXVIII

Over-civility generally ends in impertinence; for as it proceeds from design, and not from any kindness or respect, it ceases with its object.

## XXIX

I am acquainted with but one person, of whom I feel quite sure that if he were to meet an old and tried friend in the street, he would go up and speak to him in the same manner, whether in the interim he had become a lord or a beggar. Upon reflection, I may add a second to the list. Such is my estimate of the permanence and sincerity of our most boasted virtues. 'To be honest as this world goes, is to be one man picked out of ten thousand.'

## XXX

It has been said that family attachments are the only ones that stand the test of adversity, because the disgrace or misfortune is there in some measure reflected upon ourselves. A friend is no longer a friend, provided we choose to pick a quarrel with him; but we cannot so easily cut the link of relationship asunder. We therefore relieve the distresses of our near relations, or get them out of the way, lest they should shame us. But the sentiment is unnatural, and therefore must be untrue.

## XXXI

L—— said of some monkeys at a fair, that we were ashamed of their resemblance to ourselves on the same principle that we avoided *poor relations*.

## XXXII

Servants and others who consult only their ease and convenience, give a great deal of trouble by their carelessness and profligacy; those who take a pride in their work often carry it to excess, and plague you with constant advice and interference. Their duty gets so much a-head in their imagination, that it becomes their master, and your's too.

## XXXIII

There are persons who are never easy unless they are putting your books or papers in order, that is, according to their notions of the matter; and hide things lest they should be lost, where neither the owner nor any body else can find them. This is a sort of *magpie faculty*. If any thing is left where you want it, it is called making a *litter*. There is a pedantry in housewifery as in the gravest concerns. Abraham Tucker complained that whenever his maid-servant had been in his library, he could not set comfortably to work again for several days.

## XXXIV

True misanthropy consists not in pointing out the faults and follies of men, but in encouraging them in the pursuit. They who wish well to their fellow-creatures are angry at their vices and sore at their mishaps; he who flatters their errors and smiles at their ruin is their worst enemy. But men like the sycophant better than the plain-dealer, because they prefer their passions to their reason, and even to their interest.

## XXXV

I am not very patriotic in my notions, nor prejudiced in favour of my own countrymen; and one reason is, I wish to have as good an opinion as I can of human nature in general. If we are the paragons that some people would make us out, what must the rest of the world be? If we monopolize all the sense and virtue on the face of the globe, we 'leave others poor indeed,' without having a very great superabundance falling to our own share. Let them have a few advantages that we have not—grapes and the sun!

## XXXVI

When the Persian ambassador was at Edinburgh, an old Presbyterian lady, more full of zeal than discretion, fell upon him for his idolatrous belief, and said 'I hear you worship the sun!'—'In faith, Madam,' he replied, 'and so would you too if you had ever seen him!'

## XXXVII

'To be *direct* and honest is not safe,' says Iago. Shakspeare has here defined the nature of honesty, which seems to consist in the absence of any *indirect* or sinister bias. The honest man looks at and decides upon an object as it is in itself, without a view to consequences, and as if he himself were entirely out of the question; the prudent

man considers only what others will think of it; the knave, how he can turn it to his own advantage or another's detriment, which he likes better. His straight-forward simplicity of character is the reverse of what is understood by the phrase, *a man of the world*: an honest man is independent of and abstracted from material ties. This character is owing chiefly to strong natural feeling and a love of right, partly to pride and obstinacy, and a want of discursiveness of imagination. It is not well to be too witty or too wise. In many circles (not including the night-cellar or a mess-table) a clever fellow means a rogue. According to the French proverb, '*Tout homme reflechi est mechant.*' Your honest man often is, and is always set down as no better than an ass.

## XXXVIII

A person who does not tell lies will not believe that others tell them. From old habit, he cannot break the connection between words and things. This is to labour under a great disadvantage in his transactions with *men of the world*: it is playing against sharpers with loaded dice. The secret of plausibility and success is *point-blanc lying*. The advantage which men of business have over the dreamers and sleep-walkers is not in knowing the exact state of a case, but in telling you with a grave face what it is not, to suit their own purposes. This is one obvious reason why students and book-worms are so often reduced to their last legs. Education (which is a study and discipline of abstract truth) is a diversion to the instinct of lying and a bar to fortune.

## XXXIX

Those who get their money as wits, spend it like fools.

## XL

It is not true that authors, artists, &c., are uniformly ill-paid; they are often improvident, and look upon an income as an estate. A literary man who has made even five or six hundred a-year for a length of time has only himself to blame if he has none of it left (a tradesman with the same annual profits would have been rich or independent); an artist who breaks for ten thousand pounds cannot surely lament the want of patronage. A sieve might as well petition against a dry season. Persons of talent and reputation do not make money, because they do not keep it; and they do not keep it, because they do not care about it till they feel the want of it—and then *the public stop payment*. The prudent and careful, even among players, lay by fortunes.

## XLI

In general, however, it is not to be expected that those should grow rich by a special Providence, whose first and last object is by every means and at every sacrifice to grow famous. Vanity and avarice have different goals and travel different roads. The man of genius produces that which others admire: the man of business that which they will buy. If the poet is delighted with the ideas of certain things, the reader is equally satisfied with the idea of them too. The man of genius does that which no one else but himself can do: the man of business gets his wealth from the joint mechanical drudgery of all whom he has the means to employ. Trade is the Briareus that works with a hundred hands. A popular author grew rich, because he seemed to have a hundred hands to write with: but he wanted another hand to say to his well-got gains, 'Come, let me clutch thee.' Nollekens made a fortune (how he saved it we know) by having blocks of marble to turn into sharp-looking busts (which required a capital), and by hiring a number of people to hack and hew them into shape. Sir Joshua made more money than West or Barry, partly because he was a better painter, partly because gentlemen like their own portraits better than those of prophet or apostle, saint or hero. What the individual wants, he will pay the highest price for: what is done for the public the State must pay for. How if they will not? The historical painter cannot make them; and if he persists in the attempt, must be contented to fall a martyr to it. It is some glory to fail in great designs; and some punishment is due to having rashly or presumptuously embarked in them.

## XLII

It is some comfort to starve on a name: it is something to be a poor *gentleman*; and your man of letters 'writes himself *armigero*, in any bond, warrant, or quittance.' In fixing on a profession for a child, it is a consideration not to place him in one in which he may not be thought good enough to sit down in any company. Miserable mortals that we are! If you make a lawyer of him, he may become Lord Chancellor; and then all his posterity are lords. How cheap and yet acceptable a thing is nobility in this country! It does not date from Adam or the conquest. We need not laugh at Buonaparte's mushroom peers, who were something like Charlemagne's or the knights of King Arthur's round table.

## XLIII

We talk of the march of intellect, as if it only unfolded the knowledge of good: *the knowledge of evil*, which communicates with

twenty times the rapidity, is never once hinted at. Eve's apple, the torch of Prometheus, and Pandora's box, are discarded as childish fables by our wise moderns.

## XLIV

As I write this, I hear out of the window a man beating his wife and calling her names. Is this what is meant by good-nature and domestic comfort? Or is it that we have so little of these, ordinarily speaking, that we are astonished at the smallest instances of them; and have never done *lauding* ourselves for the exclusive possession of them?

## XLV

A man should never marry beneath his own rank in life—*for love*. It shews goodness of heart, but want of consideration; and the very generosity of purpose will defeat itself. She may please him and be every way qualified to make him happy: but what will others think? Can he with equal certainty of the issue introduce her to his friends and family? If not, nothing is done; for marriage is an artificial institution, and a wife a part of the machinery of society. We are not in a state of nature, to be quite free and unshackled to follow our spontaneous impulses. Nothing can reconcile the difficulty but a woman's being a paragon of wit or beauty; but every man fancies his Dulcinea a paragon of wit or beauty. Without this, he will only (with the best intentions in the world) have entailed chagrin and mortification both on himself and her; and she will be as much excluded from society as if he had made her his mistress instead of his wife. She must either mope at home, or tie him to her apron-string; and he will drag a clog and a load through life, if he be not saddled with a scold and a tyrant to boot.

## XLVI

I believe in the theoretical benevolence, and practical malignity of man.

## XLVII

We pity those who lived three hundred years ago, as if the world was hardly then awake, and they were condemned to feel their way and drag out an inanimate existence in the obscure dawn of manners and civilization: *we* forsooth are at the meridian, and the ages that are to follow are dark night. But if there were any truth in our theory, we should be as much behind-hand and objects of scorn to those who are to come after us, as we have a fancied advantage over

those that have preceded us. Supposing it to be a misfortune to have lived in the age of Raphael or Virgil, it would be desirable (if it were possible) still to postpone the period of our existence *sine die*: for the value of time must mount up, as it proceeds, through the positive, comparative, and superlative degrees. Common sense with a little reflection will teach us, that one age is as good as another; that in familiar phrase *we cannot have our cake and eat it*; and that there is no time like the time present, whether in the first, the tenth or the twentieth century.

## XLVIII

The world does not start fair in the race of time: one country has run its course before another has set out or even been heard of. Riches, luxury, and the arts, reach their utmost height in one place, while the rest of the globe is in a crude and barbarous state; decline thenceforward, and can no more be resuscitated than the dead. The twelve old Etruscan cities are stone walls, surrounded with heaps of cinders: Rome is but the tomb of its ancient greatness. Venice, Genoa, are extinct; and there are those who think that England has had her day. She may exclaim in the words of Gray's *Bard*—'To triumph and to die are mine.' America is just setting out in the path of history, on the model of England, without a language of its own, and with a continent instead of an island to run its career in—like a novice in the art, who gets a larger canvass than his master ever had to cover with his second-hand designs.

## XLIX

It was shrewdly observed that the ruin of states commences with the accumulation of people in great cities, which conceal and foster vice and profligacy.

## L

The world, said a sensible man, does not on the whole grow much worse, nor abandon itself to absolute licentiousness, because as people have children growing up, they do not wish them to be reprobates; but give them good advice and conceal their failings from them. This in each successive generation brings morality on its legs again, however sceptical in virtue or hardened in vice the old may become through habit or bad example.

## LI

As children puzzle you by asking explanations of what they do not understand, many grown people shine in company and triumph over their antagonists by dint of ignorance and conceit.

## LII

A certain bookseller wanted Northcote to write a history of art in all ages and countries, and in all its ramifications and collateral bearings. It would have taken a life to execute it; but the projector thought it was as easy to make the book as to draw up the title-page. Some minds are as sanguine from a want of imagination, as others are from an excess of it; they see no difficulty or objection in the way of what they undertake, and are blind to every thing but their own interest and wishes.

## LIII

An outcry is raised against the distresses of literature as a tax upon the public, and against the sums of money and unrepaid loans which authors borrow of strangers or friends. It is not considered that but for authors we should still have been in the hands of tyrants, who rioted in the spoil of widows and orphans, and swept the fortunes of individuals and the wealth of provinces into their pouch. It will be time enough to be alarmed when the *Literary Fund* has laid its iron grasp on fat abbey lands and portly monasteries for the poor brethren of the Muses, has establishments like those of the Franciscan and Dominican Friars for its hoary veterans or tender novices, and has laid half the property of the country under contribution. Authors are the *ideal* class of the present day, who supply the brains of the community with 'fancies and good-nights,' as the priests did of old; and who cultivating no goodly vineyard of their own to satisfy the wants of the body, are sometimes entitled, besides their pittance, to ask the protection of taste or liberality. After all, the fees of Parnassus are trifling in comparison with the toll of Purgatory.

## LIV

There are but few authors who should marry: they are already wedded to their studies and speculations. Those who are accustomed to the airy regions of poetry and romance, have a fanciful and peculiar standard of perfection of their own, to which realities can seldom come up; and disappointment, indifference, or disgust, is too often the result. Besides, their ideas and their intercourse with society make them fit for the highest matches. If an author, baulked of the goddess of his idolatry, marries an ignorant and narrow-minded person, they have no language in common: if she is a *blue-stocking*, they do nothing but wrangle. Neither have most writers the means to maintain a wife and family without difficulty. They have chosen their part, the pursuit of the intellectual and abstracted; and should not attempt to force the world of reality into a union with it, like mixing gold with

clay. In this respect, the Romish priests were perhaps wiser. 'From every work they challenged *essoin* for contemplation's sake.' Yet their celibacy was but a compromise with their sloth and supposed sanctity. We must not contradict the course of nature, after all.

## LV

There is sometimes seen more natural ease and grace in a common gipsy-girl than in an English court-circle. To demand a reason why, is to ask why the strolling fortune-teller's hair and eyes are black, or her face oval.

## LVI

The greatest proof of pride is its being able to extinguish envy and jealousy. Vanity produces the latter effect on the continent.

## LVII

When you speak of the popular effect and enthusiasm produced by the ceremonies of the Catholic church, it is presently objected that all this faith and zeal is excited by mummery and superstition. I am ready to allow that; and when I find that truth and reason have the same homage and reverence paid to them as absurdity and falsehood, I shall think all the advantages are clearly on the side of the former. The processes of reason do not commonly afford the elements of passion as their result; and the object of strong and even lofty feeling seems to appeal rather to the grossness and incongruity of the senses and imagination, than to the clear and dry deductions of the understanding. Man has been truly defined a *religious animal*; but his faith and heavenward aspirations cease if you reduce him to a mere mathematical machine. The glory and the power of the true religion are in its enlisting the affections of man along with the understanding.

## LVIII

We are imposed upon by the affectation of grace and gentility only till we see the reality; and then we laugh at the counterfeit, and are surprised that we did not see through it before.

## LIX

English women, even of the highest rank, look like *dowdies* in Paris; or exactly as country-women do in London. It is a *rule-of-three* proportion. A French milliner or servant maid laughs (not without reason) at an English Duchess. The more our fair country women dress *à la Française*, the more unlucky they seem; and the

more foreign graces they give themselves, the more awkward they grow. They want the *tournure* Françoise. Oh! how we have 'melted, thawed, and dissolved into a dew,' to see a bustling, red-faced, bare-necked English Duchess, or banker's wife, come into a box at the French theatre, bedizened and bedaubed! My Lady-mayoress or the Right Honourable the Countess Dowager of ——, before she ventures on the word *vulgar*, or scorns her untitled and untutored neighbours as beneath her notice, should go to see *les Angloises pour rire*! *That* is the looking-glass for upstart wealth and inflated aristocracy.

## LX

The advantage of our nobility over the plebeian classes is said to be in the blood and in the breed—the Norman breed, we suppose—the high noses and arched eyebrows date from the Conquest. We plead guilty to the insinuation conveyed in the expression—'the coronet face'—and bow with some sort of pride to the pride of birth. But this hypothesis is hardly compatible with the evident improvement in the present generation of noblemen and gentlemen by the intermarriages with rich heiresses, or the beautiful Pamelas of an humbler stock. *Crossing the breed* has done much good; for the actual race of Bond-street loungers would make a very respectable regiment of grenadiers; and the satire on Beau Didapper, in Fielding's Joseph Andrews, has lost its force.

## LXI

The tone of society in Paris is very far from John Bullish. They do not ask what a man is worth, or whether his father is owner of a tin-mine or a borough—but what he has to say, whether he is amiable and *spirituel*. In the case (unless a marriage is on the *tapis*) no one inquires whether his account at his banker's is high or low; or whether he has come in his carriage or on foot. An English soldier of fortune, or a great traveller, is listened to with some attention as a *marked character*; while a booby lord is no more regarded than his own footman in livery. The blank after a man's name is expected to be filled up with talent or adventures, or he passes for what he really is, a cypher.

## LXII

Our young Englishmen in Paris do not make much figure in the society of Frenchmen of education and spirit. They stumble at the threshold in point of manners, dress, and conversation. They have not only to learn the language, but to *unlearn* almost every thing else.

Both words and things are different in France; our raw recruits have to get rid of a host of prejudices, and they do it awkwardly and reluctantly, and if they attempt to make a regular stand, are presently out-voted. The terms *gothic* and *barbarous* are talisman to strike them dumb. There is, moreover, a clumsiness in both their wit and advances to familiarity, that the spiteful *brunettes* on the other side of the water do not comprehend, and that subjects them to constant sneers; and every false step adds to their confusion and want of confidence. But their lively antagonists are so flushed with victory and victims to their loquacity and charms, that they are not contented to lecture them on morals, metaphysics, sauces, and *virtu*, but proceed to teach them the true pronunciation and idiom of the English tongue. Thus a smart French widow having blundered by saying, 'I have never *made* a child;' and perceiving that it excited a smile, maintained, for three whole days, against a large company, that it was better than saying, 'I never *had* a child.'

## LXIII

The Parisian *trip* (say what they will) is not grace. It is the motion of a puppet, and may be mimicked, which grace *cannot*. It may be different from the high, heavy-heeled walk of the Englishwoman. Is it not equally remote from the step (if step it may be called) of an Andalusian girl?

## LXIV

It has been often made a subject of dispute, What is the distinguishing characteristic of man? And the answer may, perhaps, be given that *he is the only animal that dresses*. He is the only being who is coxcomb enough not to go out of the world naked as he came into it; that is ashamed of what he really is, and proud of what he is not; and that tries to pass off an artificial disguise as himself. We may safely extend the old maxim, and say that it is the tailor that makes both the gentleman and the man. *Fine feathers make fine birds*—this lie is the motto of the human mind. Dress a fellow in sheepskin, and he is a clown—dress him in scarlet, and he is a gentleman. It is then the clothes that makes all the difference; and the moral agent is simply the lay-figure to hang them on. Man, in short, is the only creature in the known world, with whom appearances pass for realities, words for things; or that has the wit to find out his own defects, and the impudence and hypocrisy, by merely concealing them, to persuade himself and others that he has them not. Teniers's monkeys, habited like monks, may be thought a satire on human nature—alas!

it is a piece of natural history. The monks are the larger and more solemn species, to be sure. Swift has taken a good bird's-eye view of man's nature, by abstracting the habitual notions of size, and looking at it in *great* or in *little*: would that some one had the boldness and the art to do a similar service, by stripping off the coat from his back, the vizor from his thoughts, or by dressing up some other creature in similar mummery! It is not his body alone that he tampers with, and metamorphoses so successfully; he tricks out his mind and soul in borrowed finery, and in the admired costume of gravity and imposture. If he has a desire to commit a base or cruel action without remorse and with the applause of the spectators, he has only to throw the cloak of religion over it, and invoke Heaven to set its seal on a massacre or a robbery. At one time dirt, at another indecency, at another rapine, at a fourth rancorous malignity, is decked out and accredited in the garb of sanctity. The instant there is a flaw, a 'damned spot' to be concealed, it is glossed over with a doubtful name. Again, we dress up our enemies in nicknames, and they march to the stake as assuredly as in *san Benitos*. The words Heretic or Papist, Jew or Infidel, labelled on those who differ from us, stand us in lieu of sense or decency. If a man be mean, he sets up for economy; if selfish, he pretends to be prudent; if harsh, firm; and so on. What enormities, what follies are not undertaken for the love of glory?—and the worst of all, are said to be for the glory of God! Strange, that a reptile should wish to be thought an angel; or that he should not be content to writhe and grovel in his native earth, without aspiring to the skies! It is from the love of dress and finery. He is the Chimney-sweeper on May-day all the year round: the soot peeps through the rags and tinsel, and all the flowers of sentiment!

## LXV

The meaning of all which is, that man is the only hypocrite in the creation; or that he is composed of two natures, the *ideal* and the *physical*, the one of which he is always trying to keep a secret from the other. He is the *Centaur not fabulous*.

## LXVI

A person who is full of secrets is a knave or a fool, or both.

## LXVII

The error of Mandeville, as well as of those opposed to him, is in concluding that man is a simple and not a compound being. The schoolmen and divines endeavour to prove that the gross and material

part of his nature is a foreign admixture, distinct from and unworthy of the man himself. The misanthropes and sceptics, on the other hand, maintain the *falsity of all human virtues*, and that all that is not sensual and selfish is a mere theatrical deception. But in order that man should be a wholly and incorrigibly selfish being, he should be shut up like an oyster in its shell, without any possible conception of what passes beyond the wall of his senses; and the *feelers* of his mind should not extend their ramifications under any circumstance or in any manner, to the thoughts and sentiments of others. Shakspeare has expressed the matter better than the pedants on either side, who wish unreasonably to exalt or degrade human nature.—'The web of our lives is as of a mingled yarn, good and ill together: our virtues would be proud, if our faults whipped them not, and our vices would despair, if they were not cherished by our virtues.'

## LXVIII

People cry out against the preposterous absurdity of such representations as the German inventions of the *Devil's Elixir* and the *Bottle Imp*. Is it then a fiction that we see? Or is it not rather a palpable reality that takes place every day and hour? Who is there that is not haunted by some heated phantom of his brain, some wizard spell, that clings to him in spite of his will, and hurries him on to absurdity or ruin? There is no machinery or phantasmagoria of a melo-drame, more extravagant than the workings of the passions. Mr. Farley may do his worst with scaly forms, with flames, and dragon's wings: but after all, the true demon is within us. How many, whose senses are shocked at the outward spectacle, and who turn away startled or disgusted might say, pointing to their bosoms, '*The moral is here!*'

## LXIX

Mr. L—— asked Sir Thomas —— who had been intimate with the Prince, if it was true that he was so fine a gentleman as he was generally represented? Sir Thomas —— made answer, that it was certainly true that the Prince was a very fine gentleman indeed: 'but,' added he, 'if I am to speak my mind, the finest gentleman I ever saw, was Sadi Baba, the ambassador to Constantinople, from the Usbek Tartars.'

## LXX

'Man is in no haste to be venerable.' At present, it seems as if there were no occasion to become so. People die as usual; but it is not the fashion to grow old. Formerly, men subsided and settled down into a respectable old age at forty, as they did into a bob-wig,

and a brown coat and waistcoat of a certain cut. The father of a family no longer pretended to pass for a gay young fellow, after he had children grown up; and women dwindled, by regular and willing gradations, into mothers and grandmothers, transferring their charms and pretensions to a blooming posterity; but these things are never thought of now-a-days. A matron of sixty flaunts it in 'La Belle Assemblée's dresses for May:' and certainly M. Stultz never inquires into the grand climacteric of his customers. Dress levels all ages as well as all ranks.

## A CHAPTER ON EDITORS

*The Monthly Magazine.*] [*November*, 1830.

'Our withers are unwrung.'

Editors are (to use an approved Scotch phrase—for what that is Scotch is not approved?) a 'sort of *tittle-tattle*'—difficult to deal with, dangerous to discuss. 'A capital subject for an article, great scope, complete novelty, and ground never touched upon!' Very true; for what Editor would insert an article against himself? Certainly none that did not feel himself free from and superior to the common foibles of his tribe. What might, therefore, be taken for a satire in manuscript, turns to a compliment in print—the exception in this, as in other cases, proves the rule—an inference we have endeavoured to express in our motto.

With one exception, then, Editors in general partake of the usual infirmity of human nature, and of persons placed in high and honorary situations. Like other individuals raised to authority, they are chosen to fill a certain post for qualities useful or ornamental to the *reading public*; but they soon fancy that the situation has been invented for their own honour and profit, and sink the use in the abuse. Kings are not the only servants of the public who imagine that they are the *state*. Editors are but men, and easily 'lay the flattering unction to their souls' that they *are* the Magazine, the Newspaper, or the Review they conduct. They have got a little power in their hands, and they wish to employ that power (as all power is employed) to increase the sense of self-importance; they borrow a certain dignity from their situation as arbiters and judges of taste and elegance, and they are determined to keep it to the detriment of their employers and of every one else. They are dreadfully afraid there should be any thing behind the Editor's chair, greater than the Editor's chair. That is a scandal to be prevented at all risks. The publication they are entrusted with for the amusement and edification of the town, they

convert, in theory and practice, into a stalking horse of their own vanity, whims, and prejudices. They cannot write a whole work themselves, but they take care that the whole is such as they might have written: it is to have the Editor's mark, like the broad R, on every page, or the N. N. at the Tuilleries; it is to bear the same image and superscription—every line is to be upon oath: nothing is to be differently conceived or better expressed than the Editor could have done it. The whole begins in vanity, and ends too often in dulness and insipidity.

It is utterly impossible to persuade an Editor that he is nobody. As Mr. Horne Tooke said, on his trial for a libel before Lord Kenyon, 'There are two parties in this cause—myself and the jury; the judge and the crier of the court attend in their respective places:' so in every periodical miscellany, there are two essential parties—the writers and the public; the Editor and the printer's-devil are merely the mechanical instruments to bring them together. There is a secret consciousness of this on the part of the Conductor of the Literary Diligence, that his place is one for shew and form rather than use; and as he cannot maintain his pretended superiority by what he does himself, he thinks to arrive at the same end by hindering others from doing their best. The 'dog-in-the-manger' principle comes into full play. If an article has nothing to recommend it, is one of no mark or likelihood, it goes in; there is no offence in it. If it is likely to strike, to draw attention, to make a noise, then every syllable is scanned, every objection is weighed: if grave, it is too grave; if witty, it is too witty. One way or other, it might be better; and while this nice point is pending, it gives place, as a matter of course, to something that there is no question about.

The responsibility, the delicacy, the nervous apprehension of the Editor, naturally increase with the probable effect and popularity of the contributions on which he has to pass judgment; and the nearer an effusion approaches to perfection, the more fatal is a single flaw, or its falling short of that superhuman standard by a hair's-breadth difference, to its final reception. If people are likely to ask, 'Who wrote a certain paper in the last number of ——?' the Editor is bound, as a point of honour, to baulk that impertinent curiosity on the part of the public. He would have it understood that all the articles are equally good, and may be equally his own. If he inserts a paper of more than the allowed average merit, his next care is to spoil by revising it. The sting, with the honey, is sure to be left out. If there is any thing that pleased you in the writing, you look in vain for it in the proof. What might electrify the reader, startles the Editor. With a paternal regard for the interests of the public, he

takes care that their tastes should not be pampered, and their expectations raised too high, by a succession of fine passages, of which it is impossible to continue a supply. He interposes between the town and their vicious appetite for the piquant and high-seasoned, as we forbid children to indulge in sweetmeats. The trite and superficial are always to be had *to order*, and present a beautiful uniformity of appearance. There is no unexpected relief, no unwelcome inequality of style, to disorder the nerves or perplex the understanding: the reader may read, and smile, and sleep, without meeting a single idea to break his repose!

Some Editors, moreover, have a way of altering the first paragraph: they have then exercised their privileges, and let you alone for the rest of the chapter. This is like paying 'a pepper-corn rent,' or making one's bow on entering a room: it is being let off cheap. Others add a pointless conclusion of their own: it is like signing their names to the article. Some have a passion for sticking in the word *however* at every opportunity, in order to impede the march of the style; and others are contented and take great pains (with Lindley Murray's Grammar lying open before them) to alter 'if it *is*' into 'if it *be*.' An Editor abhors an ellipsis. If you fling your thoughts into continued passages, they set to work to cut them up into short paragraphs: if you make frequent breaks, they turn the tables on you that way, and throw the whole composition into masses. Any thing to preserve the form and appearance of power, to make the work their own by mental stratagem, to stamp it by some fiction of criticism with their personal identity, to enable them to run away with the credit, and look upon themselves as the master-spirits of the work and of the age! If there is any point they do not understand, they are sure to meddle with it, and mar the sense; for it piques their self-love, and they think they are bound *ex-officio* to know better than the writer. Thus they substitute (at a venture, and merely for the sake of altering) one epithet for another, when perhaps the same word has occurred just before, and produces a cruel tautology, never considering the trouble you have taken to compare the context and vary the phraseology.

Editors have no misplaced confidence in the powers of their contributors: they think by the supposition they must be in the right from a single supercilious glance,—and you in the wrong, after poring over a subject for a month. There are Editors who, if you insert the name of a popular actor or artist, strike it out, and, in virtue of their authority, insert a favourite of their own,—as a dexterous attorney substitutes the name of a friend in a will. Some Editors will let you praise nobody; others will let you blame nobody. The first excites

their jealousy of contemporary merit; the last excites their fears, and they do not like to make enemies. Some insist upon giving no opinion at all, and observe an *unarmed neutrality* as to all parties and persons;—it is no wonder the world think very little of them in return. Some Editors stand upon their characters for this; others for that. Some pique themselves upon being genteel and well-dressed; others on being moral and immaculate, and do not perceive that the public never trouble their heads about the matter. We only know one Editor who openly discards all regard to character and decency, and who thrives by the dissolution of partnership, if indeed the articles were ever drawn up. We shall not mention names, as we would not advertise a work that 'ought to lie on no gentleman's table.' Some Editors drink tea with a set of *blue stockings* and literary ladies: not a whisper, not a breath that might blow away those fine cobwebs of the brain—

> 'More subtle web Arachne cannot spin;
> Nor those fine threads which oft we woven see
> Of scorched dew, do not in the air more lightly flee!'

Others dine with Lords and Academicians—for God's sake, take care what you say! Would you strip the Editor's mantel-piece of the cards of invitation that adorn it to select parties for the next six months? An Editor takes a turn in St. James's-street, and is congratulated by the successive literary or political groups on all he does *not* write; and when the mistake is found out, the true Simon Pure is dismissed. We have heard that it was well said by the proprietor of a leading journal, that he would take good care never to write a line in his own paper, as he had conflicting interests enough to manage, without adding literary jealousies to the number. On the other hand, a very good-natured and warm-hearted individual declared, 'he would never have another man of talents for an Editor' (the Editor, in this case, is to the proprietor as the author to the Editor), 'for he was tired of having their good things thrust in his teeth.' Some Editors are scrubs, mere drudges, newspaper-puffs: others are bullies or quacks: others are nothing at all—they have the name, and receive a salary for it! A literary sinecure is at once lucrative and highly respectable. At Lord's-Ground there are some old hands that are famous for '*blocking out and staying in*:' it would seem that some of our literary veterans had taken a lesson from their youthful exercises at Harrow or Eton.

All this is bad enough; but the worst is, that Editors, besides their own failings, have *friends* who aggravate and take advantage of them. These self-styled friends are the night-shade and hemlock clinging to

the work, preventing its growth and circulation, and dropping a slumberous poison from its jaundiced leaves. They form a *cordon*, an opake mass round the Editor, and persuade him that they are the support, the prop, and pillar of his reputation. They get between him and the public, and shut out the light, and set aside common-sense. They pretend anxiety for the interest of some established organ of opinion, while all they want is to make it the organ of their dogmas, prejudices, or party. They want to be the Magazine or the Review—to wield that power covertly, to warp that influence to their own purposes. If they cannot do this, they care not if it sinks or swims. They prejudge every question—fly-blow every writer who is not of their own set. A friend of theirs has three articles in the last number of ——; they strain every nerve and make pressing instances to throw a slur on a popular contribution by another hand, in order that he may write a fourth in the next number. The short articles which are read by the vulgar, are cut down to make room for the long ones, which are read by nobody but the writers and their friends. If an opinion is expressed contrary to the shibboleth of the party, it is represented as an outrage on decency and public opinion, when in truth the public are delighted with the candour and boldness displayed. They would convert the most valuable and spirited journal into a dull pamphleteer, stuffed with their own lucubrations on certain heavy topics. The self-importance of these people is in proportion to their insignificance; and what they cannot do by an appeal to argument or sound policy, they effect by importunity and insinuation. They keep the Editor in continual alarm as to what will be said of him by the public, when in fact the public will think (in nine cases out of ten) just what he tells them.

These people create much of the mischief. An Editor should have no friends—his only prompter should be the number of copies of the work that sell. It is superfluous to strike off a large impression of a work for those few squeamish persons who prefer lead to tinsel. Principle and good manners are barriers that are, in our estimate, inviolable: the rest is open to popular suffrage, and is not to be prejudged by a *coterie* with closed doors. Another difficulty lies here. An Editor should, in one sense, be a respectable man—a distinguished character; otherwise, he cannot lend his name and sanction to the work. The conductor of a periodical publication which is to circulate widely and give the tone to taste and opinion, ought to be of high standing, should have connections with society, should belong to some literary institution, should be courted by the great, be run after by the obscure. But 'here's the rub'—that one so graced and gifted can neither have his time nor his thoughts to himself. Our obligations

are mutual; and those who owe much to others, become the slaves of their good opinion and good word. He who dines out loses his free agency. He may improve in politeness; he falls off in the pith and pungency of his style. A poem is dedicated to the son of the Muses:—can the critic do otherwise than praise it? A tragedy is brought out by a noble friend and patron:—the severe rules of the drama must yield in some measure to the amenities of private life. On the contrary, Mr. —— is a garretteer—a person that nobody knows; his work has nothing but the *contents* to recommend it; it sinks into obscurity, or addresses itself to the *canaille*. An Editor, then, should be an abstraction—a being in the clouds—a mind without a body—reason without passion.——But where find such a one?

## THE LETTER-BELL

*The Monthly Magazine.*] [*March*, 1831.

Complaints are frequently made of the vanity and shortness of human life, when, if we examine its smallest details, they present a world by themselves. The most trifling objects, retraced with the eye of memory, assume the vividness, the delicacy, and importance of insects seen through a magnifying glass. There is no end of the brilliancy or the variety. The habitual feeling of the love of life may be compared to 'one entire and perfect chrysolite,' which, if analysed, breaks into a thousand shining fragments. Ask the sum-total of the value of human life, and we are puzzled with the length of the account, and the multiplicity of items in it: take any one of them apart, and it is wonderful what matter for reflection will be found in it! As I write this, the *Letter-Bell* passes: it has a lively, pleasant sound with it, and not only fills the street with its importunate clamour, but rings clear through the length of many half-forgotten years. It strikes upon the ear, it vibrates to the brain, it wakes me from the dream of time, it flings me back upon my first entrance into life, the period of my first coming up to town, when all around was strange, uncertain, adverse—a hubbub of confused noises, a chaos of shifting objects—and when this sound alone, startling me with the recollection of a letter I had to send to the friends I had lately left, brought me as it were to myself, made me feel that I had links still connecting me with the universe, and gave me hope and patience to persevere. At that loud-tinkling, interrupted sound (now and then), the long line of blue hills near the place where I was brought up waves in the horizon, a golden sunset hovers over them, the dwarf-oaks rustle their red leaves in the evening-

breeze, and the road from —— to ——, by which I first set out on my journey through life, stares me in the face as plain, but from time and change not less visionary and mysterious, than the pictures in the *Pilgrim's Progress*. I should notice, that at this time the light of the French Revolution circled my head like a glory, though dabbled with drops of crimson gore: I walked comfortable and cheerful by its side—

> 'And by the vision splendid
> Was on my way attended.'

It rose then in the east: it has again risen in the west. Two suns in one day, two triumphs of liberty in one age, is a miracle which I hope the Laureate will hail in appropriate verse. Or may not Mr. Wordsworth give a different turn to the fine passage, beginning—

> 'What, though the radiance which was once so bright,
> Be now for ever vanished from my sight;
> Though nothing can bring back the hour
> Of glory in the grass, of splendour in the flower?'

For is it not brought back, 'like morn risen on mid-*night*'; and may he not yet greet the yellow light shining on the evening bank with eyes of youth, of genius, and freedom, as of yore? No, never! But what would not these persons give for the unbroken integrity of their early opinions—for one unshackled, uncontaminated strain—one *Io pæan* to Liberty—one burst of indignation against tyrants and sycophants, who subject other countries to slavery by force, and prepare their own for it by servile sophistry, as we see the huge serpent lick over its trembling, helpless victim with its slime and poison, before it devours it! On every stanza so penned should be written the word RECREANT! Every taunt, every reproach, every note of exultation at restored light and freedom, would recal to them how their hearts failed them in the Valley of the Shadow of Death. And what shall we say to *him*—the sleep-walker, the dreamer, the sophist, the word-hunter, the craver after sympathy, but still vulnerable to truth, accessible to opinion, because not sordid or mechanical? The Bourbons being no longer tied about his neck, he may perhaps recover his original liberty of speculating; so that we may apply to him the lines about his own *Ancient Mariner*—

> 'And from his neck so free
> The Albatross fell off, and sank
> Like lead into the sea.'

This is the reason I can write an article on the *Letter Bell*, and other such subjects; I have never given the lie to my own soul. If I

have felt any impression once, I feel it more strongly a second time; and I have no wish to revile or discard my best thoughts. There is at least a thorough *keeping* in what I write—not a line that betrays a principle or disguises a feeling. If my wealth is small, it all goes to enrich the same heap; and trifles in this way accumulate to a tolerable sum. Or if the Letter-Bell does not lead me a dance into the country, it fixes me in the thick of my town recollections, I know not how long ago. It was a kind of alarm to break off from my work when there happened to be company to dinner or when I was going to the play. *That* was going to the play, indeed, when I went twice a year, and had not been more than half a dozen times in my life. Even the idea that any one else in the house was going, was a sort of reflected enjoyment, and conjured up a lively anticipation of the scene. I remember a Miss D——, a maiden lady from Wales (who in her youth was to have been married to an earl), tantalised me greatly in this way, by talking all day of going to see Mrs. Siddons' 'airs and graces' at night in some favourite part; and when the Letter-Bell announced that the time was approaching, and its last receding sound lingered on the ear, or was lost in silence, how anxious and uneasy I became, lest she and her companion should not be in time to get good places—lest the curtain should draw up before they arrived—and lest I should lose one line or look in the intelligent report which I should hear the next morning! The punctuating of time at that early period—every thing that gives it an articulate voice—seems of the utmost consequence; for we do not know what scenes in the *ideal* world may run out of them: a world of interest may hang upon every instant, and we can hardly sustain the weight of future years which are contained in embryo in the most minute and inconsiderable passing events. How often have I put off writing a letter till it was too late! How often had to run after the postman with it—now missing, now recovering the sound of his bell—breathless, angry with myself—then hearing the welcome sound come full round a corner—and seeing the scarlet costume which set all my fears and self-reproaches at rest! I do not recollect having ever repented giving a letter to the postman, or wishing to retrieve it after he had once deposited it in his bag. What I have once set my hand to, I take the consequences of, and have been always pretty much of the same humour in this respect. I am not like the person who, having sent off a letter to his mistress, who resided a hundred and twenty miles in the country, and disapproving, on second thoughts, of some expressions contained in it, took a post-chaise and four to follow and intercept it the next morning. At other times, I have sat and watched the decaying embers in a little

*back* painting-room (just as the wintry day declined), and brooded over the half-finished copy of a Rembrandt, or a landscape by Vangoyen, placing it where it might catch a dim gleam of light from the fire; while the Letter-Bell was the only sound that drew my thoughts to the world without, and reminded me that I had a task to perform in it. As to that landscape, methinks I see it now—

> 'The slow canal, the yellow-blossomed vale,
> The willow-tufted bank, the gliding sail.'

There was a windmill, too, with a poor low clay-built cottage beside it:—how delighted I was when I had made the tremulous, undulating reflection in the water, and saw the dull canvas become a lucid mirror of the commonest features of nature! Certainly, painting gives one a strong interest in nature and humanity (it is not the *dandy-school* of morals or sentiment)—

> 'While with an eye made quiet by the power
> Of harmony and the deep power of joy,
> We see into the life of things.'

Perhaps there is no part of a painter's life (if we must tell 'the secrets of the prison-house') in which he has more enjoyment of himself and his art, than that in which after his work is over, and with furtive, sidelong glances at what he has done, he is employed in washing his brushes and cleaning his pallet for the day. Afterwards, when he gets a servant in livery to do this for him, he may have other and more ostensible sources of satisfaction—greater splendour, wealth, or fame; but he will not be so wholly in his art, nor will his art have such a hold on him as when he was too poor to transfer its meanest drudgery to others—too humble to despise aught that had to do with the object of his glory and his pride, with that on which all his projects of ambition or pleasure were founded. 'Entire affection scorneth nicer hands.' When the professor is above this mechanical part of his business, it may have become a *stalking-horse* to other worldly schemes, but is no longer his *hobby-horse* and the delight of his inmost thoughts—

> 'His shame in crowds, his solitary pride!'

I used sometimes to hurry through this part of my occupation, while the Letter-Bell (which was my dinner-bell) summoned me to the fraternal board, where youth and hope

> 'Made good digestion wait on appetite
> And health on both—'

or oftener I put it off till after dinner, that I might loiter longer and with more luxurious indolence over it, and connect it with the thoughts of my next day's labours.

The dustman's-bell, with its heavy, monotonous noise, and the brisk, lively tinkle of the muffin-bell, have something in them, but not much. They will bear dilating upon with the utmost licence of inventive prose. All things are not alike *conductors* to the imagination. A learned Scotch professor found fault with an ingenious friend and arch-critic for cultivating a rookery on his grounds: the professor declared 'he would as soon think of encouraging a *froggery*.' This was barbarous as it was senseless. Strange, that a country that has produced the Scotch novels and Gertrude of Wyoming should want sentiment!

The postman's double knock at the door the next morning is 'more germain to the matter.' How that knock often goes to the heart! We distinguish to a nicety the arrival of the Two-penny or the General Post. The summons of the latter is louder and heavier, as bringing news from a greater distance, and as, the longer it has been delayed, fraught with a deeper interest. We catch the sound of what is to be paid—eight-pence, nine-pence, a shilling—and our hopes generally rise with the postage. How we are provoked at the delay in getting change—at the servant who does not hear the door! Then if the postman passes, and we do not hear the expected knock, what a pang is there! It is like the silence of death—of hope! We think he does it on purpose, and enjoys all the misery of our suspense. I have sometimes walked out to see the Mail-Coach pass, by which I had sent a letter, or to meet it when I expected one. I never see a Mail-Coach, for this reason, but I look at it as the bearer of glad tidings—the messenger of fate. I have reason to say so. The finest sight in the metropolis is that of the Mail-Coaches setting off from Piccadilly. The horses paw the ground, and are impatient to be gone, as if conscious of the precious burden they convey. There is a peculiar secresy and despatch, significant and full of meaning, in all the proceedings concerning them. Even the outside passengers have an erect and supercilious air, as if proof against the accidents of the journey. In fact, it seems indifferent whether they are to encounter the summer's heat or winter's cold, since they are borne on through the air in a winged chariot. The Mail-Carts drive up; the transfer of packages is made; and, at a signal given, they start off, bearing the irrevocable scrolls that give wings to thought, and that bind or sever hearts for ever. How we hate the Putney and Brentford stages that draw up in a line after they are gone! Some persons think the sublimest object in nature is

a ship launched on the bosom of the ocean: but give me, for my private satisfaction, the Mail-Coaches that pour down Piccadilly of an evening, tear up the pavement, and devour the way before them to the Land's-End!

In Cowper's time, Mail-Coaches were hardly set up; but he has beautifully described the coming in of the Post-Boy:—

> 'Hark! 'tis the twanging horn o'er yonder bridge,
> That with its wearisome but needful length
> Bestrides the wintry flood, in which the moon
> Sees her unwrinkled face reflected bright:—
> He comes, the herald of a noisy world,
> With spattered boots, strapped waist, and frozen locks;
> News from all nations lumbering at his back.
> True to his charge, the close-packed load behind.
> Yet careless what he brings, his one concern
> Is to conduct it to the destined inn;
> And having dropped the expected bag, pass on.
> He whistles as he goes, light-hearted wretch!
> Cold and yet cheerful; messenger of grief
> Perhaps to thousands, and of joy to some;
> To him indifferent whether grief or joy.
> Houses in ashes and the fall of stocks,
> Births, deaths, and marriages, epistles wet
> With tears that trickled down the writer's cheeks
> Fast as the periods from his fluent quill,
> Or charged with amorous sighs of absent swains
> Or nymphs responsive, equally affect
> His horse and him, unconscious of them all.'

And yet, notwithstanding this, and so many other passages that seem like the very marrow of our being, Lord Byron denies that Cowper was a poet!—The Mail-Coach is an improvement on the Post-Boy; but I fear it will hardly bear so poetical a description. The picturesque and dramatic do not keep pace with the useful and mechanical. The telegraphs that lately communicated the intelligence of the new revolution to all France within a few hours, are a wonderful contrivance; but they are less striking and appalling than the beacon-fires (mentioned by Æschylus), which, lighted from hill-top to hill-top, announced the taking of Troy, and the return of Agamemnon.

# ON THE SPIRIT OF MONARCHY

*The Liberal.*] [1822.

'Strip it of its externals, and what is it but *a jest*?'
*Charade on the word* MAJESTY.

'As for politics, I think poets are *Tories* by nature, supposing them to be by nature poets. The love of an individual person or family, that has worn a crown for many successions, is an inclination greatly adapted to the fanciful tribe. On the other hand, mathematicians, abstract reasoners, of no manner of attachment to persons, at least to the visible part of them, but prodigously devoted to the ideas of virtue, liberty, and so forth, are generally *Whigs*. It happens agreeably enough to this maxim, that the Whigs are friends to that wise, plodding, unpoetical people, the Dutch.'—*Shenstone's Letters*, 1746.

THE Spirit of Monarchy then is nothing but the craving in the human mind after the Sensible and the One. It is not so much a matter of state-necessity or policy, as a natural infirmity, a disease, a false appetite in the popular feeling, which must be gratified. Man is an individual animal with narrow faculties, but infinite desires, which he is anxious to concentrate in some one object within the grasp of his imagination, and where, if he cannot be all that he wishes himself, he may at least contemplate his own pride, vanity, and passions, displayed in their most extravagant dimensions in a being no bigger and no better than himself. Each individual would (were it in his power) be a king, a God: but as he cannot, the next best thing is to see this reflex image of his self-love, the darling passion of his breast, realized, embodied out of himself in the first object he can lay his hands on for the purpose. The slave admires the tyrant, because the last *is*, what the first *would be*. He surveys himself all over in the glass of royalty. The swelling, bloated self-importance of the one is the very counter-part and ultimate goal of the abject servility of the other. But both hate mankind for the same reason, because a respect for humanity is a diversion to their inordinate self-love, and the idea of the general good is a check to the gross intemperance of passion. The worthlessness of the object does not diminish but irritate the propensity to admire. It serves to pamper our imagination equally, and does not provoke our envy. All we want is to aggrandize our own vain-glory at second hand; and the less of real superiority or excellence there is in the person we fix upon as our proxy in this dramatic exhibition, the more easily can we change places with him, and fancy ourselves as good as he. Nay, the descent favours the rise; and we heap our tribute of applause the higher, in proportion as it is a free gift. An idol is not the worse for being of coarse materials:

a king should be a common-place man. Otherwise, he is superior in his own nature, and not dependent on our bounty or caprice. Man is a poetical animal, and delights in fiction. We like to have scope for the exercise of our mere will. We make kings of men, and Gods of stocks and stones: we are not jealous of the creatures of our own hands. We only want a peg or loop to hang our idle fancies on, a puppet to dress up, a lay-figure to paint from. It is 'THING Ferdinand, and not KING Ferdinand,' as it was wisely and wittily observed. We ask only for the stage effect; we do not go behind the scenes, or it would go hard with many of our prejudices! We see the symbols of majesty, we enjoy the pomp, we crouch before the power, we walk in the procession, and make part of the pageant, and we say in our secret hearts, there is nothing but accident that prevents us from being at the head of it. There is something in the mock-sublimity of thrones, wonderfully congenial to the human mind. Every man feels that he could sit there; every man feels that he could look big there; every man feels that he could bow there; every man feels that he could play the monarch there. The transition is so easy, and so delightful! The imagination keeps pace with royal state,

> 'And by the vision splendid
> Is on its way attended.'

The Madman in Hogarth who fancies himself a king, is not a solitary instance of this species of hallucination. Almost every true and loyal subject holds such a barren sceptre in his hand; and the meanest of the rabble, as he runs by the monarch's side, has wit enough to think —'There goes my *royal* self!' From the most absolute despot to the lowest slave there is but one step (no, not one) in point of real merit. As far as truth or reason is concerned, they might change situations to-morrow—nay, they constantly do so without the smallest loss or benefit to mankind! Tyranny, in a word, is a farce got up for the entertainment of poor human nature; and it might pass very well, if it did not so often turn into a tragedy.

We once heard a celebrated and elegant historian and a hearty Whig declare, he liked a king like George III. better than such a one as Buonaparte; because, in the former case, there was nothing to overawe the imagination but birth and situation; whereas he could not so easily brook the double superiority of the other, mental as well as adventitious. So does the spirit of independence and the levelling pride of intellect join in with the servile rage of the vulgar! This is the advantage which an hereditary has over an elective monarchy: for there is no end of the dispute about precedence while merit is

supposed to determine it, each man laying claim to this in his own person; so that there is no other way to set aside all controversy and heart-burnings, but by precluding moral and intellectual qualifications altogether, and referring the choice to accident, and giving the preference to a nonentity. 'A good king,' says Swift, 'should be, in all other respects, a mere cypher.'

It has been remarked, as a peculiarity in modern criticism, that the courtly and loyal make a point of crying up Mr. Young, as an actor, and equally running down Mr. Kean; and it has been conjectured in consequence that Mr. Kean was a *radical*. Truly, he is not a radical politician; but what is as bad, he is a radical actor. He savours too much of the reality. He is not a mock-tragedian, an automaton player—he is something besides his paraphernalia. He has 'that within which passes shew.' There is not a particle of affinity between him and the patrons of the court-writers. Mr. Young, on the contrary, is the very thing—all assumption and strut and measured pomp, full of self-importance, void of truth and nature, the mask of the characters he takes, a pasteboard figure, a stiff piece of wax-work. He fills the throne of tragedy, not like an upstart or usurper, but as a matter of course, decked out in his plumes of feathers, and robes of state, stuck into a posture, and repeating certain words by rote. Mr. Kean has a heart in his bosom, beating with human passion (a thing for the great 'to fear, not to delight in!') he is a living man, and not an artificial one. How should those, who look to the surface, and never probe deeper, endure him? He is the antithesis of a court-actor. It is the object there to suppress and varnish over the feelings, not to give way to them. His *overt* manner must shock them, and be thought a breach of all decorum. They are in dread of his fiery humours, of coming near his Voltaic Battery—they chuse rather to be roused gently from their self-complacent apathy by the application of Metallic Tractors. They dare not trust their delicate nerves within the estuary of the passions, but would slumber out their torpid existence in a calm, a Dead Sea—the air of which extinguishes life and motion!

Would it not be hard upon a little girl, who is busy in dressing up a favourite doll, to pull it in pieces before her face in order to shew her the bits of wood, the wool, and rags it is composed of? So it would be hard upon that great baby, the world, to take any of its idols to pieces, and shew that they are nothing but painted wood. Neither of them would thank you, but would consider the offer as an insult. The little girl knows as well as you do that her doll is a cheat; but she shut her eyes to it, for she finds her account in keeping up the deception. Her doll is her pretty little self. In its

glazed eyes, its cherry cheeks, its flaxen locks, its finery and its baby-house, she has a fairy vision of her own future charms, her future triumphs, a thousand hearts led captive, and an establishment for life. Harmless illusion! that can create something out of nothing, can make that which is good for nothing in itself so fine in appearance, and clothe a shapeless piece of deal-board with the attributes of a divinity! But the great world has been doing little else but playing at *make-believe* all its life-time. For several thousand years its chief rage was to paint larger pieces of wood and smear them with gore and call them Gods and offer victims to them—slaughtered hecatombs, the fat of goats and oxen, or human sacrifices—shewing in this its love of shew, of cruelty, and imposture; and woe to him who should 'peep through the blanket of the dark to cry, *Hold, hold.*'—*Great is Diana of the Ephesians*, was the answer in all ages. It was in vain to represent to them, 'Your Gods have eyes but they see not, ears but they hear not, neither do they understand'—the more stupid, brutish, helpless, and contemptible they were, the more furious, bigotted, and implacable were their votaries in their behalf.[1] The more absurd the fiction, the louder was the noise made to hide it—the more mischievous its tendency, the more did it excite all the phrenzy of the passions. Superstition nursed, with peculiar zeal, her ricketty, deformed, and preposterous offspring. She passed by the nobler races of animals even, to pay divine honours to the odious and unclean—she took toads and serpents, cats, rats, dogs, crocodiles, goats and monkeys, and hugged them to her bosom, and dandled them into deities, and set up altars to them, and drenched the earth with tears and blood in their defence; and those who did not believe in them were cursed, and were forbidden the use of bread, of fire, and water, and to worship them was piety, and their images were held sacred, and their race became Gods in perpetuity and by divine right. To touch them, was sacrilege: to kill them, death, even in your own defence. If they stung you, you must die: if they infested the land with their numbers and their pollutions, there was no remedy. The nuisance was intolerable, impassive, immortal. Fear, religious horror, disgust, hatred, heightened the flame of bigotry and intolerance. There was nothing so odious or contemptible but it found a sanctuary in the more odious and contemptible perversity of human nature. The barbarous Gods of antiquity reigned *in contempt of their worshippers*!

[1] 'Of whatsoe'er descent his Godhead be,
Stock, stone, or other homely pedigree,
In his defence his servants are as bold
As if he had been made of beaten gold.'—DRYDEN.

This game was carried on through all the first ages of the world, and is still kept up in many parts of it ; and it is impossible to describe the wars, massacres, horrors, miseries and crimes, to which it gave colour, sanctity, and sway. The idea of a God, beneficent and just, the invisible maker of all things, was abhorrent to their gross, material notions. No, they must have Gods of their own making, that they could see and handle, that they knew to be nothing in themselves but senseless images, and these they daubed over with the gaudy emblems of their own pride and passions, and these they lauded to the skies, and grew fierce, obscene, frantic before them, as the representatives of their sordid ignorance and barbaric vices. Truth, Good, were idle names to them, without a meaning. They must have a lie, a palpable, pernicious lie, to pamper their crude, unhallowed conceptions with, and to exercise the untameable fierceness of their wills. The Jews were the only people of antiquity who were withheld from running headlong into this abomination ; yet so strong was the propensity in them (from inherent frailty as well as neighbouring example) that it could only be curbed and kept back by the hands of Omnipotence.[1] At length, reason prevailed over imagination so far, that these brute idols and their altars were overturned ; it was thought too much to set up stocks and stones, Golden Calves and Brazen Serpents, as *bona-fide* Gods and Goddesses, which men were to fall down and worship at their peril—and Pope long after summed up the merits of the whole mythologic tribe in a handsome distich—

> 'Gods partial, changeful, passionate, unjust,
> Whose attributes were rage, revenge, or lust.'

It was thought a bold stride to divert the course of our imaginations, the overflowings of our enthusiasm, our love of the mighty and the marvellous, from the dead to the living *subject*, and there we stick. We have got living idols, instead of dead ones ; and we fancy that they are real, and put faith in them accordingly. Oh, Reason ! when will thy long minority expire ? It is not now the fashion to make Gods of wood and stone and brass, but we make kings of common men, and are proud of our own handy-work. We take a child from his birth, and we agree, when he grows up to be a man, to heap the highest honours of the state upon him, and to pay the most devoted homage to his will. Is there any thing in the person, 'any mark, any likelihood,' to warrant this sovereign awe and dread ? No : he may be little better than an ideot, little short of a madman, and yet

[1] They *would* have a king in spite of the devil. The image-worship of the Papists is a batch of the same leaven. The apishness of man's nature would not let even the Christian Religion escape.

he is no less qualified for king.[1] If he can contrive to pass the College of Physicians, the Herald's College dub him divine. Can we make any given individual taller or stronger or wiser than other men, or different in any respect from what nature intended him to be? No; but we can make a king of him. We cannot add a cubit to the stature, or instil a virtue into the minds of monarchs—but we can put a sceptre into their hands, a crown upon their heads, we can set them on an eminence, we can surround them with circumstance, we can aggrandise them with power, we can pamper their appetites, we can pander to their wills. We can do every thing to exalt them in external rank and station—nothing to lift them one step higher in the scale of moral or intellectual excellence. Education does not give capacity or temper; and the education of kings is not especially directed to useful knowledge or liberal sentiment. What then is the state of the case? The highest respect of the community and of every individual in it is paid and is due of right there, where perhaps not an idea can take root, or a single virtue be engrafted. Is not this to erect a standard of esteem directly opposite to that of mind and morals? The lawful monarch may be the best or the worst man in his dominions, he may be the wisest or the weakest, the wittiest or the stupidest: still he is equally entitled to our homage as king, for it is the place and power we bow to, and not the man. He may be a sublimation of all the vices and diseases of the human heart; yet we are not to say so, we dare not even think so. 'Fear God, and honour the King,' is equally a maxim at all times and seasons. The personal character of the king has nothing to do with the question. Thus the extrinsic is set up over the intrinsic by authority: wealth and interest lend their countenance to gilded vice and infamy on prin-

[1] 'In fact, the argument drawn from the supposed incapacity of the people against a representative Government, comes with the worst grace in the world from the patrons and admirers of hereditary government. Surely, if government were a thing requiring the utmost stretch of genius, wisdom, and virtue to carry it on, the office of King would never even have been dreamt of as hereditary, any more than that of poet, painter, or philosopher. It is easy here 'for the Son to tread in the Sire's steady steps.' It requires nothing but the will to do it. Extraordinary talents are not once looked for. Nay, a person, who would never have risen by natural abilities to the situation of churchwarden or parish beadle, succeeds by unquestionable right to the possession of a throne, and wields the energies of an empire, or decides the fate of the world with the smallest possible share of human understanding. The line of distinction which separates the regal purple from the slabbering-bib is sometimes fine indeed; as we see in the case of the two Ferdinands. Any one above the rank of an ideot is supposed capable of exercising the highest functions of royal state. Yet these are the persons who talk of the people as a swinish multitude, and taunt them with their want of refinement and philosophy.'—*Yellow Dwarf*, p. 84.

ciple, and outward shew and advantages become the symbols and the standard of respect in despite of useful qualities or well-directed efforts through all ranks and gradations of society. 'From the crown of the head to the sole of the foot there is no soundness left.' The whole style of moral thinking, feeling, acting, is in a false tone—is hollow, spurious, meretricious. Virtue, says Montesquieu, is the principle of republics; honour, of a monarchy. But it is 'honour dishonourable, sin-bred'—it is the honour of trucking a principle for a place, of exchanging our honest convictions for a ribbon or a garter. The business of life is a scramble for unmerited precedence. Is not the highest respect entailed, the highest station filled without any possible proofs or pretensions to public spirit or public principle? Shall not the next places to it be secured by the sacrifice of them? It is the order of the day, the understood etiquette of courts and kingdoms. For the servants of the crown to presume on merit, when the crown itself is held as an heir-loom by prescription, is a kind of *lèse majesté*, an indirect attainder of the title to the succession. Are not all eyes turned to the sun of court-favour? Who would not then reflect its smile by the performance of any acts which can avail in the eye of the great, and by the surrender of any virtue, which attracts neither notice nor applause? The stream of corruption begins at the fountain-head of court influence. The sympathy of mankind is that on which all strong feeling and opinion floats; and this sets in full in every absolute monarchy to the side of tinsel shew and iron-handed power, in contempt and defiance of right and wrong. The right and the wrong are of little consequence, compared to the *in* and the *out*. The distinction between Whig and Tory is merely nominal: neither have their country one bit at heart. Phaw! we had forgot—Our British monarchy is a mixed, and the only perfect form of government; and therefore what is here said cannot properly apply to it. But MIGHT BEFORE RIGHT is the motto blazoned on the front of unimpaired and undivided Sovereignty!—

A court is the centre of fashion; and no less so, for being the sink of luxury and vice—

> ——'Of outward shew
> Elaborate, of inward less exact.'

The goods of fortune, the baits of power, the indulgences of vanity, may be accumulated without end, and the taste for them increases as it is gratified: the love of virtue, the pursuit of truth, grow stale and dull in the dissipation of a court. Virtue is thought crabbed and morose, knowledge pedantic, while every sense is pampered, and every folly tolerated. Every thing tends naturally to personal

aggrandisement and unrestrained self-will. It is easier for monarchs as well as other men 'to tread the primrose path of dalliance' than 'to scale the steep and thorny road to heaven.' The vices, when they have leave from power and authority, go greater lengths than the virtues; example justifies almost every excess, and 'nice customs curtsey to great kings.' What chance is there that monarchs should not yield to the temptations of gallantry there, where youth and beauty are as wax? What female heart can indeed withstand the attractions of a throne—the smile that melts all hearts, the air that awes rebellion, the frown that kings dread, the hand that scatters fairy wealth, that bestows titles, places, honour, power, the breast on which the star glitters, the head circled with a diadem, whose dress dazzles with its richness and its taste, who has nations at his command, senates at his controul, 'in form and motion so express and admirable, in action how like an angel, in apprehension how like a God; the beauty of the world, the paragon of animals!' The power of resistance is so much the less, where fashion extends impunity to the frail offender, and screens the loss of character.

'Vice is undone, if she forgets her birth,
And stoops from angels to the dregs of earth;
But 'tis the fall degrades her to a whore:
Let greatness own her, and she 's mean no more.
Her birth, her beauty, crowds and courts confess,
Chaste matrons praise her, and grave bishops bless.
In golden chains the willing world she draws,
And hers the Gospel is, and hers the laws.'[1]

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[1] A lady of quality abroad, in allusion to the gallantries of the reigning Prince, being told, 'I suppose it will be your turn next?' said, 'No, I hope not; for you know it is impossible to refuse!' What a satire on the court and fashionables! If this be true, female virtue in the blaze of royalty is no more than the moth in the candle, or ice in the sun's ray. What will the great themselves say to it, in whom at this rate,

———'the same luck holds,
They all are subjects, courtiers, and cuckolds!'

Out upon it! We 'll not believe it. Alas! poor virtue, what is to become of the very idea of it, if we are to be told that every man within the precincts of a palace is an *hypothetical* cuckold, or holds his wife's virtue in trust for the Prince? We entertain no doubt that many ladies of quality have resisted the importunities of a throne, and that many more would do so in private life, if they had the desired opportunity: nay, we have been assured by several that a king would no more be able to prevail with them than any other man! If however there is any foundation for the above insinuation, it throws no small light on the Spirit of Monarchy, which by the supposition implies in it the *virtual* surrender of the whole sex at discretion; and at the same time accounts perhaps for the indifference shown by some monarchs in availing themselves of so mechanical a privilege.

The air of a court is not assuredly that which is most favourable to the practice of self-denial and strict morality. We increase the temptations of wealth, of power, and pleasure a thousand-fold, while we can give no additional force to the antagonist principles of reason, disinterested integrity and goodness of heart. Is it to be wondered at that courts and palaces have produced so many monsters of avarice, cruelty, and lust? The adept in voluptuousness is not likely to be a proportionable proficient in humanity. To feed on plate or be clothed in purple, is not to feel for the hungry and the naked. He who has the greatest power put into his hands, will only become more impatient of any restraint in the use of it. To have the welfare and the lives of millions placed at our disposal, is a sort of warrant, a challenge to squander them without mercy. An arbitrary monarch set over the heads of his fellows does not identify himself with them, or learn to comprehend their rights or sympathise with their interests, but looks down upon them as of a different species from himself, as insects crawling on the face of the earth, that he may trample on at his pleasure, or if he spares them, it is an act of royal grace—he is besotted with power, blinded with prerogative, an alien to his nature, a traitor to his trust, and instead of being the organ of public feeling and public opinion, is an excrescence and an anomaly in the state, a bloated mass of morbid humours and proud flesh! A constitutional king, on the other hand, is a servant of the public, a representative of the people's wants and wishes, dispensing justice and mercy according to law. Such a monarch is the King of England! Such was his late, and such is his present Majesty George the IVth!—

Let us take the Spirit of Monarchy in its highest state of exaltation, in the moment of its proudest triumph—a Coronation-day. We now see it in our mind's eye; the preparation of weeks—the expectation of months—the seats, the privileged places, are occupied in the obscurity of night, and in silence—the day dawns slowly, big with the hope of Cæsar and of Rome—the golden censers are set in order, the tables groan with splendour and with luxury—within the inner space the rows of peeresses are set, and revealed to the eye decked out in ostrich feathers and pearls, like beds of lilies sparkling with a thousand dew-drops—the marshals and the heralds are in motion—the full organ, majestic, peals forth the Coronation Anthem—every thing is ready—and all at once the Majesty of kingdoms bursts upon the astonished sight—his person is swelled out with all the gorgeousness of dress, and swathed in bales of silk and golden tissues—the bow with which he greets the assembled multitude, and the representatives of foreign kings, is the climax of conscious dignity, bending gracefully on its own bosom, and instantly thrown back into the

sightless air, as if asking no recognition in return—the oath of mutual fealty between him and his people is taken—the fairest flowers of female beauty precede the Sovereign, scattering roses; the sons of princes page his heels, holding up the robes of crimson and ermine—he staggers and reels under the weight of royal pomp, and of a nation's eyes; and thus the pageant is launched into the open day, dazzling the sun, whose beams seem beaten back by the sun of royalty—there were the warrior, the statesman, and the mitred head—there was Prince Leopold, like a panther in its dark glossy pride, and Castlereagh, clad in triumphant smiles and snowy satin, unstained with his own blood—the loud trumpet brays, the cannon roars, the spires are mad with music, the stones in the street are startled at the presence of a king:—the crowd press on, the metropolis heaves like a sea in restless motion, the air is thick with loyalty's quick pants in its monarch's arms—all eyes drink up the sight, all tongues reverberate the sound—

> 'A present deity they shout around,
> A present deity the vaulted roofs rebound!'

What does it all amount to? A shew—a theatrical spectacle! What does it prove? That a king is crowned, that a king is dead! What is the moral to be drawn from it, that is likely to sink into the heart of a nation? That greatness consists in finery, and that supreme merit is the dower of birth and fortune! It is a form, a ceremony to which each successor to the throne is entitled in his turn as a matter of right. Does it depend on the inheritance of virtue, on the acquisition of knowledge in the new monarch, whether he shall be thus exalted in the eyes of the people? No;—to say so is not only an offence in manners, but a violation of the laws. The king reigns in contempt of any such pragmatical distinctions. They are set aside, proscribed, treasonable, as it relates to the august person of the monarch; what is likely to become of them in the minds of the people? A Coronation overlays and drowns all such considerations for a generation to come, and so far it serves its purpose well. It debauches the understandings of the people, and makes them the slaves of sense and show. It laughs to scorn and tramples upon every other claim to distinction or respect. Is the chief person in the pageant a tyrant? It does not lessen, but aggrandise him to the imagination. Is he the king of a free people? We make up in love and loyalty what we want in fear. Is he young? He borrows understanding and experience from the learning and tried wisdom of councils and parliaments. Is he old? He leans upon the youth and beauty that attend his triumph. Is he weak? Armies support him with their myriads. Is he diseased? What is health to a staff of

physicians? Does he die? The truth is out, and he is then—nothing!

There is a cant among court-sycophants of calling all those who are opposed to them, '*the rabble*,' '*fellows*,' '*miscreants*,' &c. This shews the grossness of their ideas of all true merit, and the false standard of rank and power by which they measure every thing; like footmen, who suppose their masters must be gentlemen, and that the rest of the world are low people. Whatever is opposed to power, they think despicable; whatever suffers oppression, they think deserves it. They are ever ready to side with the strong, to insult and trample on the weak. This is with us a pitiful fashion of thinking. They are not of the mind of Pope, who was so full of the opposite conviction, that he has even written a bad couplet to express it:—

> 'Worth makes the man, and want of it the fellow:
> The rest is all but leather and prunella.'

Those lines in Cowper also must sound very puerile or old-fashioned to courtly ears:—

> 'The only amaranthine flower on earth
> Is virtue; the only lasting treasure, truth.'

To this sentiment, however, we subscribe our hearts and hands. There is nothing truly liberal but that which postpones its own claims to those of propriety—or great, but that which looks out of itself to others. All power is but an unabated nuisance, a barbarous assumption, an aggravated injustice, that is not directed to the common good: all grandeur that has not something corresponding to it in personal merit and heroic acts, is a deliberate burlesque, and an insult on common sense and human nature. That which is true, the understanding ratifies: that which is good, the heart owns: all other claims are spurious, vitiated, mischevious, false—fit only for those who are sunk below contempt, or raised above opinion. We hold in scorn all *right-lined* pretensions but those of rectitude. If there is offence in this, we are ready to abide by it. If there is shame, we take it to ourselves: and we hope and hold that the time will come, when all other idols but those which represent pure truth and real good, will be looked upon with the same feelings of pity and wonder that we now look back to the images of Thor and Woden!

Really, that men born to a throne (limited or unlimited) should employ the brief span of their existence here in doing all the mischief in their power, in levying cruel wars and undermining the liberties of the world, to prove to themselves and others that their pride and

passions are of more consequence than the welfare of mankind at large, would seem a little astonishing, but that the fact is so. It is not our business to preach lectures to monarchs, but if we were at all disposed to attempt the ungracious task, we should do it in the words of an author who often addressed the ear of monarchs.

'A man may read a sermon,' says Jeremy Taylor, 'the best and most passionate that ever man preached, if he shall but enter into the sepulchres of kings. In the same Escurial where the Spanish princes live in greatness and power, and decree war or peace, they have wisely placed a cemetery where their ashes and their glory shall sleep till time shall be no more: and where *our* kings have been crowned, their ancestors lie interred, and they must walk over their grandsire's head to take his crown. There is an acre sown with royal seed, the copy of the greatest change from rich to naked, from ceiled roofs to arched coffins, from living like Gods to die like men. There is enough to cool the flames of lust, to abate the height of pride, to appease the itch of covetous desires, to sully and dash out the dissembling colours of a lustful, artificial, and imaginary beauty. There the warlike and the peaceful, the fortunate and the miserable, the beloved and the despised princes mingle their dust, and pay down their symbol of mortality, and tell all the world, that when we die our ashes shall be equal to kings, and our accounts shall be easier, and our pains for our crimes shall be less. To my apprehension, it is a sad record which is left by Athenæus concerning Ninus, the great Assyrian monarch, whose life and death is summed up in these words: "Ninus, the Assyrian, had an ocean of gold, and other riches more than the sand in the Caspian sea; he never saw the stars, and perhaps he never desired it; he never stirred up the holy fire among the Magi; nor touched his God with the sacred rod, according to the laws; he never offered sacrifice, nor worshipped the Deity, nor administered justice, nor spake to the people, nor numbered them; but he was most valiant to eat and drink, and having mingled his wines, he threw the rest upon the stones. This man is dead: behold his sepulchre, and now hear where Ninus is. *Sometime I was Ninus, and drew the breath of a living man, but now am nothing but clay. I have nothing but what I did eat, and what I served to myself in lust is all my portion: the wealth with which I was blest, my enemies meeting together shall carry away, as the mad Thyades carry a raw goat. I am gone to Hell; and when I went thither, I carried neither gold nor horse, nor a silver chariot. I that wore a mitre, am now a little heap of dust!*"'
—Taylor's Holy Living and Dying.

# ON THE SCOTCH CHARACTER

## (*A Fragment.*)

*The Liberal.*] [1822.

The Scotch nation are a body-corporate. They hang together like a swarm of bees. I do not know how it may be among themselves, but with us they are all united as one man. They are not straggling individuals, but embodied, formidable abstractions—determined personifications of the land they come from. A Scotchman gets on in the world, because he is not one, but many. He moves in himself a host, drawn up in battle-array, and armed at all points against all impugners. He is a double existence—he stands for himself and his country. Every Scotchman is bond and surety for every other Scotchman—he thinks nothing Scotch foreign to him. If you see a Scotchman in the street, you may be almost sure it is another Scotchman he is arm in arm with; and what is more, you may be sure they are talking of Scotchmen. Begin at the Arctic Circle, and they take Scotland in their way back. Plant the foot of the compasses in the meridian, and they turn it by degrees to 'Edina's darling seat'—true as the needle to the Pole. If you happen to say it is a high wind, they say there are high winds in Edinburgh. Should you mention Hampstead or Highgate, they smile at this as a local prejudice, and remind you of the Calton Hill. The conversation wanders and is impertinent, unless it hangs by this loop. It 'runs the great mile, and is still at home.' You would think there was no other place in the world but Scotland, but that they strive to convince you at every turn of its superiority to all other places. Nothing goes down but Scotch Magazines and Reviews, Scotch airs, Scotch bravery, Scotch hospitality, Scotch novels, and Scotch logic. Some one the other day at a literary dinner in Scotland apologised for alluding to the name of Shakespear so often, because he was not a Scotchman. What a blessing that the Duke of Wellington was not a Scotchman, or we should never have heard the last of him! Even Sir Walter Scott, I understand, talks of the Scotch novels in all companies; and by waving the title of the author, is at liberty to repeat the subject *ad infinitum*.

Lismahago in Smollett is a striking and laughable picture of this national propensity. He maintained with good discretion and method that oat-cakes were better than wheaten bread, and that the air of the old town of Edinburgh was sweet and salubrious. He was a favourable specimen of the class—acute though pertinacious, pleasant but

wrong.[1] In general, his countrymen only plod on with the national character fastened behind them, looking round with wary eye and warning voice to those who would pick out a single article of their precious charge; and are as drawling and troublesome as if they were hired by the hour to disclaim and exemplify all the vices of which they stand accused. Is this repulsive egotism peculiar to them merely in their travelling capacity, when they have to make their way amongst strangers, and are jealous of the honour of the parent-country, on which they have ungraciously turned their backs? So Lord Erskine, after an absence of fifty years, made an appropriate eulogy on the place of his birth, and having traced the feeling of patriotism in himself to its source in that habitual attachment which all wandering tribes have to their places of fixed residence, turned his horses' heads towards England—and farewell sentiment!

The Irish and others, who come and stay among us, however full they may be of the same prejudice, keep it in a great measure to themselves, and do not vent it in all companies and on all occasions, proper or improper. The natives of the sister-kingdom in particular rather cut their country like a poor relation, are shy of being seen in one another's company, and try to soften down the *brogue* into a natural gentility of expression. A Scotchman, on the contrary, is never easy but when his favourite subject is started, treats it with unqualified breadth of accent, and seems assured that every one else must be as fond of talking of Scotland and Scotchmen as he is.

Is it a relic of the ancient system of *clanship*? And are the Scotch pitted against all the rest of the world, on the same principle that they formerly herded and banded together under some chosen leader, and *harried* the neighbouring district? This seems to be the most likely solution. A feeling of antipathy and partisanship, of offensive and defensive warfare, may be considered as necessary to the mind of a Scotchman. He is nothing in himself but as he is opposed to or in league with others. He must be for or against somebody. He must have a cause to fight for; a point to carry in argument. He is not an unit but an aggregate; he is not a link, but a chain. He belongs to the regiment. I should hardly call a Scotchman *conceited*, though there is often something that borders strongly on the appearance of it. He has (speaking in the lump) no personal or individual pretensions. He is not proud of himself, but of being a Scotchman. He has no existence or excellence except what he derives from some external accident, or shares with some body of men. He is a Brunonian, a Cameronian, a Jacobite, a Covenanter; he is of some party, he

[1] Some persons have asserted that the Scotch have no humour. It is in vain to set up this plea, since Smollett was a Scotchman.

espouses some creed, he is great in some controversy, he was bred in some University, has attended a certain course of lectures, understands Gaelic, and upon occasion wears the Highland dress. An Englishman is satisfied with the character of his country, and proceeds to set up for himself; an Irishman despairs of that of his, and leaves it to shift for itself; a Scotchman pretends to respectability as such, and owes it to his country to make you hate the very name by his ceaseless importunity and intolerance in its behalf. An Irishman is mostly vain of his person, an Englishman of his understanding, a Frenchman of his politeness—a Scotchman thanks God for the place of his birth. The face of a Scotchman is to him accordingly the face of a friend. It is enough for him to let you know that he speaks the dialect that Wilkie speaks, that he has sat in company with the Author of Waverley. He does not endeavour to put forward his own notions so much as to inform you of the school in politics, in morals, in physic, in which he is an adept; nor does he attempt to overpower you by wit, by reason, by eloquence, but to tire you out by dint of verbal logic; and in common-places it must be confessed that he is invincible. There he is *teres et rotundus*. He fortifies himself in these, circumvallation within circumvallation, till his strong-hold is impregnable by art and nature. I never knew a Scotchman give up an argument but once. It was a very learned man, the Editor of an Encyclopedia,—not my friend, Mr. Macvey Napier. On some one's proposing the question why Greek should not be printed in the Roman type, this gentleman answered, that in that case it would be impossible to distinguish the two languages. Every one stared, and it was asked how at this rate we distinguished French from English? It was the forlorn hope. Any one else would have laughed, and confessed the blunder. But the Editor was a grave man—made an obstinate defence (the best his situation allowed of) and yielded in the forms and with the honours of war.

A Scotchman is generally a dealer in staple-propositions, and not in rarities and curiosities of the understanding. He does not like an idea the worse for its coming to him from a reputable, well-authenticated source, as I conceive he might feel more respect for a son of Burns than for Burns himself, on the same hereditary or genealogical principle. He swears (of course) by the Edinburgh Review, and thinks Blackwood not easily put down. He takes the word of a Professor in the University-chair in a point of philosophy as he formerly took the Laird's word in a matter of life and death; and has the names of the Says, the Benthams, the Mills, the Malthuses, in his mouth, instead of the Montroses, the Gordons, and the Macullamores. He follows in a train; he enlists under some standard; he

comes under some collateral description. He is of the tribe of Issachar, and not of Judah. He stickles for no higher distinction than that of his clan, or vicinage.[1] In a word, the Scotch are the creatures of inveterate habit. They pin their faith on example and authority. All their ideas are cast in a previous mould, and rivetted to those of others. It is not a single blow, but a repetition of blows, that leaves an impression on them. They are strong only in the strength of prejudice and numbers. The genius of their greatest living writer is the genius of national tradition. He has 'damnable iteration in him'; but hardly one grain of sheer invention. His mind is turned instinctively backward on the past—he cannot project it forward to the future. He has not the faculty of imagining any thing, either in individual or general truth, different from what has been handed down to him for such. Give him *costume*, dialect, manners, popular superstitions, grotesque characters, supernatural events, and local scenery, and he is a prodigy, a man-monster among writers—take these actually embodied and endless materials from him, and he is a common man, with as little original power of mind as he has (unfortunately) independence or boldness of spirit!

The Scotch, with all their mechanical, wholesale attachment to names and parties, are venal in politics,[2] and cowardly in friendship. They crouch to power; and would be more disposed to fall upon and crush, than come forward to the support of, a sinking individual. They are not like La Fleur in the Sentimental Journey, who advanced three steps forward to his master when the *Gens-d'Armes* arrested him: they are like the *Maitre d'Hotel*, who retired three paces backwards on the same occasion. They will support a generic denomination, where they have numbers to support them again: they make a great gulp, and swallow down a feudal lord with all the retinue he can muster—*the more, the merrier*—but of a single unprotected straggler they are shy, jealous, scrupulous in the extreme as to character, inquisitive as to connections, curious in all the particulars of birth, parentage and education. Setting his prejudices of country, religion, or party aside, you have no hold of a Scotchman but by his self-interest. If it is for his credit or advantage to stand by you, he will

[1] This may be in part the reason of the blunder they have made in laying so much stress on what they call the *Cockney School in Poetry*—as if the people in London were proud of that distinction, and really thought it a particular honour to get their living in the metropolis, as the Scottish 'Kernes and Gallowglasses' think it a wonderful step in their progress through life to be able to hire a lodging and pay *scot and lot* in the good town of Edinburgh.

[2] It was not always so. But by knocking on the head the Jacobite loyalty of the Scotch, their political integrity of principle has been destroyed and dissipated to all the winds of Heaven.

do it: otherwise, it will go very much against both his stomach and his conscience to do so, and you must e'en shift for yourself. You may trust something to the generosity and magnanimity of an Englishman or an Irishman; they act from an impulse of the blood or from a sense of justice: A Scotchman (the exceptions are splendid indeed) uniformly calculates the consequences to himself. He is naturally faithful to a leader, as I said before, that is, to a powerful head; but his fidelity amounts to little more than servility. He is a bigot to the shadow of power and authority, a slave to prejudice and custom, and a coward in every thing else. He has not a particle of mental courage. Caesar's wife was not to be suspected; and it is the same with a Scotchman's friend. If a word is said against your moral character, they shun you like a plague-spot. They are not only afraid of a charge being proved against you, but they dare not disprove it, lest by clearing you of it they should be supposed a party to what had no existence or foundation. They thus imbibe a bad opinion of you from hearsay, and conceal the good they know of you both from themselves and the world. If your political orthodoxy is called in question, they take the alarm as much as if they were apprehensive of being involved in a charge of high treason. One would think that the whole country laboured, as they did Sixty Years Since, under an imputation of disaffection, and were exposed to the utmost vigilance of the police, so that each person had too little character for loyalty himself to run any additional risk by his neighbour's bad name. This is not the case at present: but they carry their precautions and circumspection in this respect to such an idle and stupid excess, as can only be accounted for from local circumstances and history—that is to say, from the effects of that long system of suspicion, persecution and *surveillance*, to which they were exposed during a century of ridiculous (at least of unsuccessful) wars and rebellions, in favour of the House of Stuart. They suffered much for King James and the *Good Cause*; but since that time their self-love must be excused to look at home. On my once complaining to a Scotchman of what I thought a dereliction of his client's cause by the counsel for the defendant in a prosecution for libel, I received for answer—That 'Mr. —— had defended the accused as far as he could, *consistently with his character*,'—though the only character the Learned Gentleman could boast, had been acquired by his skill, if not his courage, in resisting prosecutions of this kind.

The delicate sensibility (not to say soreness) of the Scotch in matters of moral reputation, may in like manner be accounted for (indirectly) from their domiciliary system of church-government, of Kirk-assemblies, and Ruling Elders: and in the unprincipled assurance

with which aspersions of this sort are thrown out, and the panic-terror which they strike into the timid or hypocritical, one may see the remaining effects of Penance-Sheets and Cutty-Stools! Poor Burns! he called up the ghost of Dr. Hornbook, but did not lay the spirit of cant and lying in the Cunning North!

Something however, it must be confessed, has been done; a change has been effected. Extremes meet; and the Saint has been (in some instances) merged in the Sinner. The essential character of the Scotch is determined self-will, the driving at a purpose; so that whatever they undertake, they make thorough-stitch work, and carry as far as it will go. This is the case in the pretensions some of their writers have lately set up to a contempt for Cutty-Stools, and to all the freedom of wit and humour. They have been so long under interdict that they break out with double violence, and stop at nothing. Of all *blackguards* (I use the term for want of any other) a Scotch blackguard is for this reason the worst. First, the character sits ill upon him for want of use, and is sure to be most outrageously caricatured. He is only just broke loose from the shackles of regularity and restraint, and is forced to play strange antics to be convinced that they are not still clinging to his heels. Secondly, formality, hypocrisy, and a deference to opinion, are the 'sins that most easily beset him.' When therefore he has once made up his mind to disregard appearances, he becomes totally reckless of character, and 'at one bound high overleaps all bound' of decency and common sense. Again, there is perhaps a natural hardness and want of nervous sensibility about the Scotch, which renders them (rules and the consideration of consequences apart) not very nice or scrupulous in their proceedings. If they are not withheld by conscience or prudence, they have no *mauvaise honte*, no involuntary qualms or tremors, to qualify their effrontery and disregard of principle. Their impudence is extreme, their malice is cold-blooded, covert, crawling, deliberate, without the frailty or excuse of passion. They club their vices and their venality together, and by the help of both together are invincible. The choice spirits who have lately figured in a much-talked-of publication, with 'old Sylvanus at their head,'—

'Leaning on cypress stadle stout,'—

in their 'pious orgies' resemble a troop of Yahoos, or a herd of Satyrs—

'And with their horned feet they beat the ground!'—

that is to say, the floor of Mr. Blackwood's shop! There is one other publication, a match for this in flagrant impudence and dauntless

dulness, which is the John Bull. The Editor is supposed, for the honour of Scotland, to be an Irishman. What the *Beacon* might have proved, there is no saying; but it would have been curious to have seen some articles of Sir Walter's undoubted hand proceeding from this quarter, as it has been always contended that Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine was too low and scurrilous a publication for him to have any share in it. The adventure of the *Beacon* has perhaps discovered to Sir Walter's admirers and the friends of humanity in general, that

'Entire affection scorneth nicer hands!'

Old Dr. Burney, about the middle of the last century, called one morning on Thomson, the Author of The Seasons, at a late hour, and on expressing his surprise at the poet's not having risen sooner, received for answer,—'I had no motive, young man!' A Scotchman acts always from a motive, and on due consideration; and if he does not act right or with a view to honest ends, is more dangerous than any one else. Others may plead the vices of their blood in extenuation of their errors; but a Scotchman is a machine, and should be constructed on sound moral, and philosophical principles, or should be put a stop to altogether.

## MY FIRST ACQUAINTANCE WITH POETS

*The Liberal.*] [1823.

My father was a Dissenting Minister at W——m in Shropshire; and in the year 1798 (the figures that compose that date are to me like the 'dreaded name of Demogorgon') Mr. Coleridge came to Shrewsbury, to succeed Mr. Rowe in the spiritual charge of a Unitarian Congregation there. He did not come till late on the Saturday afternoon before he was to preach; and Mr. Rowe, who himself went down to the coach in a state of anxiety and expectation, to look for the arrival of his successor, could find no one at all answering the description but a round-faced man in a short black coat (like a shooting jacket) which hardly seemed to have been made for him, but who seemed to be talking at a great rate to his fellow-passengers. Mr. Rowe had scarce returned to give an account of his disappointment, when the round-faced man in black entered, and dissipated all doubts on the subject, by beginning to talk. He did not cease while he staid; nor has he since, that I know of. He held the good town of Shrewsbury in delightful suspense for three weeks that he remained there, 'fluttering the *proud Salopians* like an

eagle in a dove-cote ;' and the Welch mountains that skirt the horizon with their tempestuous confusion, agree to have heard no such mystic sounds since the days of

'High-born Hoel's harp or soft Llewellyn's lay!'

As we passed along between W——m and Shrewsbury, and I eyed their blue tops seen through the wintry branches, or the red rustling leaves of the sturdy oak-trees by the road-side, a sound was in my ears as of a Siren's song ; I was stunned, startled with it, as from deep sleep ; but I had no notion then that I should ever be able to express my admiration to others in motley imagery or quaint allusion, till the light of his genius shone into my soul, like the sun's rays glittering in the puddles of the road. I was at that time dumb, inarticulate, helpless, like a worm by the way-side, crushed, bleeding, lifeless ; but now, bursting from the deadly bands that 'bound them,

'With Styx nine times round them,'

my ideas float on winged words, and as they expand their plumes, catch the golden light of other years. My soul has indeed remained in its original bondage, dark, obscure, with longings infinite and unsatisfied ; my heart, shut up in the prison-house of this rude clay, has never found, nor will it ever find, a heart to speak to ; but that my understanding also did not remain dumb and brutish, or at length found a language to express itself, I owe to Coleridge. But this is not to my purpose.

My father lived ten miles from Shrewsbury, and was in the habit of exchanging visits with Mr. Rowe, and with Mr. Jenkins of Whitchurch (nine miles farther on) according to the custom of Dissenting Ministers in each other's neighbourhood. A line of communication is thus established, by which the flame of civil and religious liberty is kept alive, and nourishes its smouldering fire unquenchable, like the fires in the Agamemnon of Æschylus, placed at different stations, that waited for ten long years to announce with their blazing pyramids the destruction of Troy. Coleridge had agreed to come over to see my father, according to the courtesy of the country, as Mr. Rowe's probable successor ; but in the meantime I had gone to hear him preach the Sunday after his arrival. A poet and a philosopher getting up into a Unitarian pulpit to preach the Gospel, was a romance in these degenerate days, a sort of revival of the primitive spirit of Christianity, which was not to be resisted.

It was in January, 1798, that I rose one morning before daylight, to walk ten miles in the mud, and went to hear this celebrated person preach. Never, the longest day I have to live, shall I have such

another walk as this cold, raw, comfortless one, in the winter of the year 1798. *Il y a des impressions que ni le tems ni les circonstances peuvent effacer. Dusse-je vivre des siècles entiers, le doux tems de ma jeunesse ne peut renaître pour moi, ni s'effacer jamais dans ma mémoire.* When I got there, the organ was playing the 100th psalm, and, when it was done, Mr. Coleridge rose and gave out his text, 'And he went up into the mountain to pray, HIMSELF, ALONE.' As he gave out this text, his voice 'rose like a steam of rich distilled perfumes,' and when he came to the two last words, which he pronounced loud, deep, and distinct, it seemed to me, who was then young, as if the sounds had echoed from the bottom of the human heart, and as if that prayer might have floated in solemn silence through the universe. The idea of St. John came into mind, 'of one crying in the wilderness, who had his loins girt about, and whose food was locusts and wild honey.' The preacher then launched into his subject, like an eagle dallying with the wind. The sermon was upon peace and war; upon church and state—not their alliance, but their separation—on the spirit of the world and the spirit of Christianity, not as the same, but as opposed to one another. He talked of those who had 'inscribed the cross of Christ on banners dripping with human gore.' He made a poetical and pastoral excursion,—and to shew the fatal effects of war, drew a striking contrast between the simple shepherd boy, driving his team afield, or sitting under the hawthorn, piping to his flock, 'as though he should never be old,' and the same poor country-lad, crimped, kidnapped, brought into town, made drunk at an alehouse, turned into a wretched drummer-boy, with his hair sticking on end with powder and pomatum, a long cue at his back, and tricked out in the loathsome finery of the profession of blood.

'Such were the notes our once-lov'd poet sung.'

And for myself, I could not have been more delighted if I had heard the music of the spheres. Poetry and Philosophy had met together. Truth and Genius had embraced, under the eye and with the sanction of Religion. This was even beyond my hopes. I returned home well satisfied. The sun that was still labouring pale and wan through the sky, obscured by thick mists, seemed an emblem of the *good cause*; and the cold dank drops of dew that hung half melted on the beard of the thistle, had something genial and refreshing in them; for there was a spirit of hope and youth in all nature, that turned every thing into good. The face of nature had not then the brand of Jus DIVINUM on it:

'Like to that sanguine flower inscrib'd with woe.'

On the Tuesday following, the half-inspired speaker came. I was called down into the room where he was, and went half-hoping, half-afraid. He received me very graciously, and I listened for a long time without uttering a word. I did not suffer in his opinion by my silence. 'For those two hours,' he afterwards was pleased to say, 'he was conversing with W. H.'s forehead!' His appearance was different from what I had anticipated from seeing him before. At a distance, and in the dim light of the chapel, there was to me a strange wildness in his aspect, a dusky obscurity, and I thought him pitted with the small-pox. His complexion was at that time clear, and even bright—

'As are the children of yon azure sheen.'

His forehead was broad and high, light as if built of ivory, with large projecting eyebrows, and his eyes rolling beneath them like a sea with darkened lustre. 'A certain tender bloom his face o'erspread,' a purple tinge as we see it in the pale thoughtful complexions of the Spanish portrait-painters, Murillo and Velasquez. His mouth was gross, voluptuous, open, eloquent; his chin good-humoured and round; but his nose, the rudder of the face, the index of the will, was small, feeble, nothing—like what he has done. It might seem that the genius of his face as from a height surveyed and projected him (with sufficient capacity and huge aspiration) into the world unknown of thought and imagination, with nothing to support or guide his veering purpose, as if Columbus had launched his adventurous course for the New World in a scallop, without oars or compass. So at least I comment on it after the event. Coleridge in his person was rather above the common size, inclining to the corpulent, or like Lord Hamlet, 'somewhat fat and pursy.' His hair (now, alas! grey) was then black and glossy as the raven's, and fell in smooth masses over his forehead. This long pendulous hair is peculiar to enthusiasts, to those whose minds tend heavenward; and is traditionally inseparable (though of a different colour) from the pictures of Christ. It ought to belong, as a character, to all who preach *Christ crucified*, and Coleridge was at that time one of those!

It was curious to observe the contrast between him and my father, who was a veteran in the cause, and then declining into the vale of years. He had been a poor Irish lad, carefully brought up by his parents, and sent to the University of Glasgow (where he studied under Adam Smith) to prepare him for his future destination. It was his mother's proudest wish to see her son a Dissenting Minister. So if we look back to past generations (as far as eye can reach) we see the same hopes, fears, wishes, followed by the same disappoint-

ments, throbbing in the human heart; and so we may see them (if we look forward) rising up for ever, and disappearing, like vapourish bubbles, in the human breast! After being tossed about from congregation to congregation in the heats of the Unitarian controversy, and squabbles about the American war, he had been relegated to an obscure village, where he was to spend the last thirty years of his life, far from the only converse that he loved, the talk about disputed texts of Scripture and the cause of civil and religious liberty. Here he passed his days, repining but resigned, in the study of the Bible, and the perusal of the Commentators,—huge folios, not easily got through, one of which would outlast a winter! Why did he pore on these from morn to night (with the exception of a walk in the fields or a turn in the garden to gather broccoli-plants or kidney-beans of his own rearing, with no small degree of pride and pleasure)?—Here were 'no figures nor no fantasies,'—neither poetry nor philosophy—nothing to dazzle, nothing to excite modern curiosity; but to his lack-lustre eyes there appeared, within the pages of the ponderous, unwieldy, neglected tomes, the sacred name of JEHOVAH in Hebrew capitals: pressed down by the weight of the style, worn to the last fading thinness of the understanding, there were glimpses, glimmering notions of the patriarchal wanderings, with palm-trees hovering in the horizon, and processions of camels at the distance of three thousand years; there was Moses with the Burning Bush, the number of the Twelve Tribes, types, shadows, glosses on the law and the prophets; there were discussions (dull enough) on the age of Methuselah, a mighty speculation! there were outlines, rude guesses at the shape of Noah's Ark and of the riches of Solomon's Temple; questions as to the date of the creation, predictions of the end of all things; the great lapses of time, the strange mutations of the globe were unfolded with the voluminous leaf, as it turned over; and though the soul might slumber with an hieroglyphic veil of inscrutable mysteries drawn over it, yet it was in a slumber ill-exchanged for all the sharpened realities of sense, wit, fancy, or reason. My father's life was comparatively a dream; but it was a dream of infinity and eternity, of death, the resurrection, and a judgment to come!

No two individuals were ever more unlike than were the host and his guest. A poet was to my father a sort of nondescript: yet whatever added grace to the Unitarian cause was to him welcome. He could hardly have been more surprised or pleased, if our visitor had worn wings. Indeed, his thoughts had wings; and as the silken sounds rustled round our little wainscoted parlour, my father threw back his spectacles over his forehead, his white hairs mixing with its sanguine hue; and a smile of delight beamed across his rugged cordial

face, to think that Truth had found a new ally in Fancy![1] Besides, Coleridge seemed to take considerable notice of me, and that of itself was enough. He talked very familiarly, but agreeably, and glanced over a variety of subjects. At dinner-time he grew more animated, and dilated in a very edifying manner on Mary Wolstonecraft and Mackintosh. The last, he said, he considered (on my father's speaking of his *Vindiciæ Gallicæ* as a capital performance) as a clever scholastic man—a master of the topics,—or as the ready warehouse-man of letters, who knew exactly where to lay his hand on what he wanted, though the goods were not his own. He thought him no match for Burke, either in style or matter. Burke was a metaphysician, Mackintosh a mere logician. Burke was an orator (almost a poet) who reasoned in figures, because he had an eye for nature: Mackintosh, on the other hand, was a rhetorician, who had only an eye to common-places. On this I ventured to say that I had always entertained a great opinion of Burke, and that (as far as I could find) the speaking of him with contempt might be made the test of a vulgar democratical mind. This was the first observation I ever made to Coleridge, and he said it was a very just and striking one. I remember the leg of Welsh mutton and the turnips on the table that day had the finest flavour imaginable. Coleridge added that Mackintosh and Tom Wedgwood (of whom, however, he spoke highly) had expressed a very indifferent opinion of his friend Mr. Wordsworth, on which he remarked to them—'He strides on so far before you, that he dwindles in the distance!' Godwin had once boasted to him of having carried on an argument with Mackintosh for three hours with dubious success; Coleridge told him—'If there had been a man of genius in the room, he would have settled the question in five minutes.' He asked me if I had ever seen Mary Wolstonecraft, and I said, I had once for a few moments, and that she seemed to me to turn off Godwin's objections to something she advanced with quite a playful, easy air. He replied, that 'this was only one instance of the ascendancy which people of imagination exercised over those of mere intellect.' He did not rate Godwin very high[2] (this was caprice or prejudice, real or affected) but he had a great idea of Mrs. Wolstonecraft's powers of conversation, none at all of her talent

[1] My father was one of those who mistook his talent after all. He used to be very much dissatisfied that I preferred his Letters to his Sermons. The last were forced and dry; the first came naturally from him. For ease, half-plays on words, and a supine, monkish, indolent pleasantry, I have never seen them equalled.

[2] He complained in particular of the presumption of attempting to establish the future immortality of man 'without' (as he said) 'knowing what Death was or what Life was'—and the tone in which he pronounced these two words seemed to convey a complete image of both.

for book-making. We talked a little about Holcroft. He had been asked if he was not much struck *with* him, and he said, he thought himself in more danger of being struck *by* him. I complained that he would not let me get on at all, for he required a definition of every the commonest word, exclaiming, 'What do you mean by a *sensation*, Sir? What do you mean by an *idea*?' This, Coleridge said, was barricadoing the road to truth:—it was setting up a turnpike-gate at every step we took. I forget a great number of things, many more than I remember; but the day passed off pleasantly, and the next morning Mr. Coleridge was to return to Shrewsbury. When I came down to breakfast, I found that he had just received a letter from his friend T. Wedgwood, making him an offer of 150*l.* a-year if he chose to wave his present pursuit, and devote himself entirely to the study of poetry and philosophy. Coleridge seemed to make up his mind to close with this proposal in the act of tying on one of his shoes. It threw an additional damp on his departure. It took the wayward enthusiast quite from us to cast him into Deva's winding vales, or by the shores of old romance. Instead of living at ten miles distance, of being the pastor of a Dissenting congregation at Shrewsbury, he was henceforth to inhabit the Hill of Parnassus, to be a Shepherd on the Delectable Mountains. Alas! I knew not the way thither, and felt very little gratitude for Mr. Wedgwood's bounty. I was presently relieved from this dilemma; for Mr. Coleridge, asking for a pen and ink, and going to a table to write something on a bit of card, advanced towards me with undulating step, and giving me the precious document, said that that was his address, *Mr. Coleridge*, *Nether-Stowey*, *Somersetshire*; and that he should be glad to see me there in a few weeks' time, and, if I chose, would come half-way to meet me. I was not less surprised than the shepherd-boy (this simile is to be found in Cassandra) when he sees a thunder-bolt fall close at his feet. I stammered out my acknowledgments and acceptance of this offer (I thought Mr. Wedgwood's annuity a trifle to it) as well as I could; and this mighty business being settled, the poet-preacher took leave, and I accompanied him six miles on the road. It was a fine morning in the middle of winter, and he talked the whole way. The scholar in Chaucer is described as going

——'Sounding on his way.'

So Coleridge went on his. In digressing, in dilating, in passing from subject to subject, he appeared to me to float in air, to slide on ice. He told me in confidence (going along) that he should have preached two sermons before he accepted the situation at Shrewsbury, one on Infant Baptism, the other on the Lord's Supper, shewing that he

could not administer either, which would have effectually disqualified him for the object in view. I observed that he continually crossed me on the way by shifting from one side of the foot-path to the other. This struck me as an odd movement; but I did not at that time connect it with any instability of purpose or involuntary change of principle, as I have done since. He seemed unable to keep on in a strait line. He spoke slightingly of Hume (whose Essay on Miracles he said was stolen from an objection started in one of South's sermons—*Credat Judæus Apella*!) I was not very much pleased at this account of Hume, for I had just been reading, with infinite relish, that completest of all metaphysical *choke-pears*, his *Treatise on Human Nature*, to which the *Essays*, in point of scholastic subtlety and close reasoning, are mere elegant trifling, light summer-reading. Coleridge even denied the excellence of Hume's general style, which I think betrayed a want of taste or candour. He however made me amends by the manner in which he spoke of Berkeley. He dwelt particularly on his *Essay on Vision* as a masterpiece of analytical reasoning. So it undoubtedly is. He was exceedingly angry with Dr. Johnson for striking the stone with his foot, in allusion to this author's Theory of Matter and Spirit, and saying, 'Thus I confute him, Sir.' Coleridge drew a parallel (I don't know how he brought about the connection) between Bishop Berkeley and Tom Paine. He said the one was an instance of a subtle, the other of an acute mind, than which no two things could be more distinct. The one was a shop-boy's quality, the other the characteristic of a philosopher. He considered Bishop Butler as a true philosopher, a profound and conscientious thinker, a genuine reader of nature and of his own mind. He did not speak of his *Analogy*, but of his *Sermons at the Rolls' Chapel*, of which I had never heard. Coleridge somehow always contrived to prefer the *unknown* to the *known*. In this instance he was right. The *Analogy* is a tissue of sophistry, of wire-drawn, theological special-pleading; the *Sermons* (with the Preface to them) are in a fine vein of deep, matured reflection, a candid appeal to our observation of human nature, without pedantry and without bias. I told Coleridge I had written a few remarks, and was sometimes foolish enough to believe that I had made a discovery on the same subject (the *Natural Disinterestedness of the Human Mind*)—and I tried to explain my view of it to Coleridge, who listened with great willingness, but I did not succeed in making myself understood. I sat down to the task shortly afterwards for the twentieth time, got new pens and paper, determined to make clear work of it, wrote a few meagre sentences in the skeleton-style of a mathematical demonstration, stopped half-way down the second page; and, after trying in

vain to pump up any words, images, notions, apprehensions, facts, or observations, from that gulph of abstraction in which I had plunged myself for four or five years preceding, gave up the attempt as labour in vain, and shed tears of helpless despondency on the blank unfinished paper. I can write fast enough now. Am I better than I was then? Oh no! One truth discovered, one pang of regret at not being able to express it, is better than all the fluency and flippancy in the world. Would that I could go back to what I then was! Why can we not revive past times as we can revisit old places? If I had the quaint Muse of Sir Philip Sidney to assist me, I would write a *Sonnet to the Road between W——m and Shrewsbury*, and immortalise every step of it by some fond enigmatical conceit. I would swear that the very milestones had ears, and that Harmer-hill stooped with all its pines, to listen to a poet, as he passed! I remember but one other topic of discourse in this walk. He mentioned Paley, praised the naturalness and clearness of his style, but condemned his sentiments, thought him a mere time-serving casuist, and said that 'the fact of his work on Moral and Political Philosophy being made a text-book in our Universities was a disgrace to the national character.' We parted at the six-mile stone; and I returned homeward pensive but much pleased. I had met with unexpected notice from a person, whom I believed to have been prejudiced against me. 'Kind and affable to me had been his condescension, and should be honoured ever with suitable regard.' He was the first poet I had known, and he certainly answered to that inspired name. I had heard a great deal of his powers of conversation, and was not disappointed. In fact, I never met with any thing at all like them, either before or since. I could easily credit the accounts which were circulated of his holding forth to a large party of ladies and gentlemen, an evening or two before, on the Berkeleian Theory, when he made the whole material universe look like a transparency of fine words; and another story (which I believe he has somewhere told himself) of his being asked to a party at Birmingham, of his smoking tobacco and going to sleep after dinner on a sofa, where the company found him to their no small surprise, which was increased to wonder when he started up of a sudden, and rubbing his eyes, looked about him, and launched into a three-hours' description of the third heaven, of which he had had a dream, very different from Mr. Southey's Vision of Judgment, and also from that other Vision of Judgment, which Mr. Murray, the Secretary of the Bridge-street Junto, has taken into his especial keeping!

On my way back, I had a sound in my ears, it was the voice of Fancy: I had a light before me, it was the face of Poetry. The one still lingers there, the other has not quitted my side! Coleridge

in truth met me half-way on the ground of philosophy, or I should not have been won over to his imaginative creed. I had an uneasy, pleasurable sensation all the time, till I was to visit him. During those months the chill breath of winter gave me a welcoming; the vernal air was balm and inspiration to me. The golden sunsets, the silver star of evening, lighted me on my way to new hopes and prospects. *I was to visit Coleridge in the spring.* This circumstance was never absent from my thoughts, and mingled with all my feelings. I wrote to him at the time proposed, and received an answer postponing my intended visit for a week or two, but very cordially urging me to complete my promise then. This delay did not damp, but rather increased my ardour. In the meantime, I went to Llangollen Vale, by way of initiating myself in the mysteries of natural scenery; and I must say I was enchanted with it. I had been reading Coleridge's description of England in his fine *Ode on the Departing Year*, and I applied it, *con amore*, to the objects before me. That valley was to me (in a manner) the cradle of a new existence: in the river that winds through it, my spirit was baptised in the waters of Helicon!

I returned home, and soon after set out on my journey with unworn heart and untired feet. My way lay through Worcester and Gloucester, and by Upton, where I thought of Tom Jones and the adventure of the muff. I remember getting completely wet through one day, and stopping at an inn (I think it was at Tewkesbury) where I sat up all night to read Paul and Virginia. Sweet were the showers in early youth that drenched my body, and sweet the drops of pity that fell upon the books I read! I recollect a remark of Coleridge's upon this very book, that nothing could shew the gross indelicacy of French manners and the entire corruption of their imagination more strongly than the behaviour of the heroine in the last fatal scene, who turns away from a person on board the sinking vessel, that offers to save her life, because he has thrown off his clothes to assist him in swimming. Was this a time to think of such a circumstance? I once hinted to Wordsworth, as we were sailing in his boat on Grasmere lake, that I thought he had borrowed the idea of his *Poems on the Naming of Places* from the local inscriptions of the same kind in Paul and Virginia. He did not own the obligation, and stated some distinction without a difference, in defence of his claim to originality. Any the slightest variation would be sufficient for this purpose in his mind; for whatever *he* added or omitted would inevitably be worth all that any one else had done, and contain the marrow of the sentiment. I was still two days before the time fixed for my arrival, for I had taken care to set out early enough. I

stopped these two days at Bridgewater, and when I was tired of sauntering on the banks of its muddy river, returned to the inn, and read Camilla. So have I loitered my life away, reading books, looking at pictures, going to plays, hearing, thinking, writing on what pleased me best. I have wanted only one thing to make me happy; but wanting that, have wanted everything!

I arrived, and was well received. The country about Nether Stowey is beautiful, green and hilly, and near the sea-shore. I saw it but the other day, after an interval of twenty years, from a hill near Taunton. How was the map of my life spread out before me, as the map of the country lay at my feet! In the afternoon, Coleridge took me over to All-Foxden, a romantic old family-mansion of the St. Aubins, where Wordsworth lived. It was then in the possession of a friend of the poet's, who gave him the free use of it. Somehow that period (the time just after the French Revolution) was not a time when *nothing was given for nothing*. The mind opened, and a softness might be perceived coming over the heart of individuals, beneath 'the scales that fence' our self-interest. Wordsworth himself was from home, but his sister kept house, and set before us a frugal repast; and we had free access to her brother's poems, the *Lyrical Ballads*, which were still in manuscript, or in the form of *Sybilline Leaves*. I dipped into a few of these with great satisfaction, and with the faith of a novice. I slept that night in an old room with blue hangings, and covered with the round-faced family-portraits of the age of George I. and II. and from the wooded declivity of the adjoining park that overlooked my window, at the dawn of day, could

'—— hear the loud stag speak.'

In the outset of life (and particularly at this time I felt it so) our imagination has a body to it. We are in a state between sleeping and waking, and have indistinct but glorious glimpses of strange shapes, and there is always something to come better than what we see. As in our dreams the fulness of the blood gives warmth and reality to the coinage of the brain, so in youth our ideas are clothed, and fed, and pampered with our good spirits; we breathe thick with thoughtless happiness, the weight of future years presses on the strong pulses of the heart, and we repose with undisturbed faith in truth and good. As we advance, we exhaust our fund of enjoyment and of hope. We are no longer wrapped in *lamb's-wool*, lulled in Elysium. As we taste the pleasures of life, their spirit evaporates, the sense palls; and nothing is left but the phantoms, the lifeless shadows of what *has been*!

That morning, as soon as breakfast was over, we strolled out into the park, and seating ourselves on the trunk of an old ash-tree that stretched along the ground, Coleridge read aloud with a sonorous and musical voice, the ballad of *Betty Foy*. I was not critically or sceptically inclined. I saw touches of truth and nature, and took the rest for granted. But in the *Thorn*, the *Mad Mother*, and the *Complaint of a Poor Indian Woman*, I felt that deeper power and pathos which have been since acknowledged,

> 'In spite of pride, in erring reason's spite,'

as the characteristics of this author; and the sense of a new style and a new spirit in poetry came over me. It had to me something of the effect that arises from the turning up of the fresh soil, or of the first welcome breath of Spring,

> 'While yet the trembling year is unconfirmed.'

Coleridge and myself walked back to Stowey that evening, and his voice sounded high

> 'Of Providence, foreknowledge, will, and fate,
> Fix'd fate, free-will, foreknowledge absolute,'

as we passed through echoing grove, by fairy stream or waterfall, gleaming in the summer moonlight! He lamented that Wordsworth was not prone enough to believe in the traditional superstitions of the place, and that there was a something corporeal, a *matter-of-fact-ness*, a clinging to the palpable, or often to the petty, in his poetry, in consequence. His genius was not a spirit that descended to him through the air; it sprung out of the ground like a flower, or unfolded itself from a green spray, on which the gold-finch sang. He said, however (if I remember right) that this objection must be confined to his descriptive pieces, that his philosophic poetry had a grand and comprehensive spirit in it, so that his soul seemed to inhabit the universe like a palace, and to discover truth by intuition, rather than by deduction. The next day Wordsworth arrived from Bristol at Coleridge's cottage. I think I see him now. He answered in some degree to his friend's description of him, but was more gaunt and Don Quixote-like. He was quaintly dressed (according to the *costume* of that unconstrained period) in a brown fustian jacket and striped pantaloons. There was something of a roll, a lounge in his gait, not unlike his own Peter Bell. There was a severe, worn pressure of thought about his temples, a fire in his eye (as if he saw something in

objects more than the outward appearance), an intense high narrow forehead, a Roman nose, cheeks furrowed by strong purpose and feeling, and a convulsive inclination to laughter about the mouth, a good deal at variance with the solemn, stately expression of the rest of his face. Chantry's bust wants the marking traits; but he was teazed into making it regular and heavy: Haydon's head of him, introduced into the *Entrance of Christ into Jerusalem*, is the most like his drooping weight of thought and expression. He sat down and talked very naturally and freely, with a mixture of clear gushing accents in his voice, a deep guttural intonation, and a strong tincture of the northern *burr*, like the crust on wine. He instantly began to make havoc of the half of a Cheshire cheese on the table, and said triumphantly that 'his marriage with experience had not been so unproductive as Mr. Southey's in teaching him a knowledge of the good things of this life.' He had been to see the *Castle Spectre* by Monk Lewis, while at Bristol, and described it very well. He said 'it fitted the taste of the audience like a glove.' This *ad captandum* merit was however by no means a recommendation of it, according to the severe principles of the new school, which reject rather than court popular effect. Wordsworth, looking out of the low, latticed window, said, 'How beautifully the sun sets on that yellow bank!' I thought within myself, 'With what eyes these poets see nature!' and ever after, when I saw the sun-set stream upon the objects facing it, conceived I had made a discovery, or thanked Mr. Wordsworth for having made one for me! We went over to All-Foxden again the day following, and Wordsworth read us the story of Peter Bell in the open air; and the comment made upon it by his face and voice was very different from that of some later critics! Whatever might be thought of the poem, 'his face was as a book where men might read strange matters,' and he announced the fate of his hero in prophetic tones. There is a *chaunt* in the recitation both of Coleridge and Wordsworth, which acts as a spell upon the hearer, and disarms the judgment. Perhaps they have deceived themselves by making habitual use of this ambiguous accompaniment. Coleridge's manner is more full, animated, and varied; Wordsworth's more equable, sustained, and internal. The one might be termed more *dramatic*, the other more *lyrical*. Coleridge has told me that he himself liked to compose in walking over uneven ground, or breaking through the straggling branches of a copse-wood; whereas Wordsworth always wrote (if he could) walking up and down a straight gravel-walk, or in some spot where the continuity of his verse met with no collateral interruption. Returning that same evening, I got into a metaphysical argument with Wordsworth, while Coleridge was explaining the

different notes of the nightingale to his sister, in which we neither of us succeeded in making ourselves perfectly clear and intelligible. Thus I passed three weeks at Nether Stowey and in the neighbourhood, generally devoting the afternoons to a delightful chat in an arbour made of bark by the poet's friend Tom Poole, sitting under two fine elm-trees, and listening to the bees humming round us, while we quaffed our *flip*. It was agreed, among other things, that we should make a jaunt down the Bristol-Channel, as far as Linton. We set off together on foot, Coleridge, John Chester, and I. This Chester was a native of Nether Stowey, one of those who were attracted to Coleridge's discourse as flies are to honey, or bees in swarming-time to the sound of a brass pan. He 'followed in the chase, like a dog who hunts, not like one that made up the cry.' He had on a brown cloth coat, boots, and corduroy breeches, was low in stature, bow-legged, had a drag in his walk like a drover, which he assisted by a hazel switch, and kept on a sort of trot by the side of Coleridge, like a running footman by a state coach, that he might not lose a syllable or sound that fell from Coleridge's lips. He told me his private opinion, that Coleridge was a wonderful man. He scarcely opened his lips, much less offered an opinion the whole way: yet of the three, had I to chuse during that journey, I would be John Chester. He afterwards followed Coleridge into Germany, where the Kantean philosophers were puzzled how to bring him under any of their categories. When he sat down at table with his idol, John's felicity was complete; Sir Walter Scott's, or Mr. Blackwood's, when they sat down at the same table with the King, was not more so. We passed Dunster on our right, a small town between the brow of a hill and the sea. I remember eying it wistfully as it lay below us: contrasted with the woody scene around, it looked as clear, as pure, as *embrowned* and ideal as any landscape I have seen since, of Gaspar Poussin's or Domenichino's. We had a long day's march—(our feet kept time to the echoes of Coleridge's tongue)—through Minehead and by the Blue Anchor, and on to Linton, which we did not reach till near midnight, and where we had some difficulty in making a lodgment. We however knocked the people of the house up at last, and we were repaid for our apprehensions and fatigue by some excellent rashers of fried bacon and eggs. The view in coming along had been splendid. We walked for miles and miles on dark brown heaths overlooking the Channel, with the Welsh hills beyond, and at times descended into little sheltered valleys close by the sea-side, with a smuggler's face scowling by us, and then had to ascend conical hills with a path winding up through a coppice to a barren top, like a monk's shaven crown, from one of which I pointed out to

Coleridge's notice the bare masts of a vessel on the very edge of the horizon and within the red-orbed disk of the setting sun, like his own spectre-ship in the *Ancient Mariner*. At Linton the character of the sea-coast becomes more marked and rugged. There is a place called the *Valley of Rocks* (I suspect this was only the poetical name for it) bedded among precipices overhanging the sea, with rocky caverns beneath, into which the waves dash, and where the sea-gull for ever wheels its screaming flight. On the tops of these are huge stones thrown transverse, as if an earthquake had tossed them there, and behind these is a fretwork of perpendicular rocks, something like the *Giant's Causeway*. A thunder-storm came on while we were at the inn, and Coleridge was running out bare-headed to enjoy the commotion of the elements in the *Valley of Rocks*, but as if in spite, the clouds only muttered a few angry sounds, and let fall a few refreshing drops. Coleridge told me that he and Wordsworth were to have made this place the scene of a prose-tale, which was to have been in the manner of, but far superior to, the *Death of Abel*, but they had relinquished the design. In the morning of the second day, we breakfasted luxuriously in an old-fashioned parlour, on tea, toast, eggs, and honey, in the very sight of the bee-hives from which it had been taken, and a garden full of thyme and wild flowers that had produced it. On this occasion Coleridge spoke of Virgil's Georgics, but not well. I do not think he had much feeling for the classical or elegant. It was in this room that we found a little worn-out copy of the *Seasons*, lying in a window-seat, on which Coleridge exclaimed, '*That* is true fame!' He said Thomson was a great poet, rather than a good one; his style was as meretricious as his thoughts were natural. He spoke of Cowper as the best modern poet. He said the *Lyrical Ballads* were an experiment about to be tried by him and Wordsworth, to see how far the public taste would endure poetry written in a more natural and simple style than had hitherto been attempted; totally discarding the artifices of poetical diction, and making use only of such words as had probably been common in the most ordinary language since the days of Henry II. Some comparison was introduced between Shakespear and Milton. He said 'he hardly knew which to prefer. Shakespear appeared to him a mere stripling in the art; he was as tall and as strong, with infinitely more activity than Milton, but he never appeared to have come to man's estate; or if he had, he would not have been a man, but a monster.' He spoke with contempt of Gray, and with intolerance of Pope. He did not like the versification of the latter. He observed that 'the ears of these couplet-writers might be charged with having short memories, that could not retain the harmony of

whole passages.' He thought little of Junius as a writer; he had a dislike of Dr. Johnson; and a much higher opinion of Burke as an orator and politician, than of Fox or Pitt. He however thought him very inferior in richness of style and imagery to some of our elder prose-writers, particularly Jeremy Taylor. He liked Richardson, but not Fielding; nor could I get him to enter into the merits of *Caleb Williams*.[1] In short, he was profound and discriminating with respect to those authors whom he liked, and where he gave his judgment fair play; capricious, perverse, and prejudiced in his antipathies and distastes. We loitered on the 'ribbed sea-sands,' in such talk as this, a whole morning, and I recollect met with a curious sea-weed, of which John Chester told us the country name! A fisherman gave Coleridge an account of a boy that had been drowned the day before, and that they had tried to save him at the risk of their own lives. He said 'he did not know how it was that they ventured, but, Sir, we have a *nature* towards one another.' This expression, Coleridge remarked to me, was a fine illustration of that theory of disinterestedness which I (in common with Butler) had adopted. I broached to him an argument of mine to prove that *likeness* was not mere association of ideas. I said that the mark in the sand put one in mind of a man's foot, not because it was part of a former impression of a man's foot (for it was quite new) but because it was like the shape of a man's foot. He assented to the justness of this distinction (which I have explained at length elsewhere, for the benefit of the curious) and John Chester listened; not from any interest in the subject, but because he was astonished that I should be able to suggest any thing to Coleridge that he did not already know. We returned on the third morning, and Coleridge remarked the silent cottage-smoke curling up the valleys where, a few evenings before, we had seen the lights gleaming through the dark.

In a day or two after we arrived at Stowey, we set out, I on my return home, and he for Germany. It was a Sunday morning, and he was to preach that day for Dr. Toulmin of Taunton. I asked him if he had prepared anything for the occasion? He said he had not even thought of the text, but should as soon as we parted. I did not go to hear him,—this was a fault,—but we met in the evening at Bridgewater. The next day we had a long day's walk to Bristol,

[1] He had no idea of pictures, of Claude or Raphael, and at this time I had as little as he. He sometimes gives a striking account at present of the Cartoons at Pisa, by Buffamalco and others; of one in particular, where Death is seen in the air brandishing his scythe, and the great and mighty of the earth shudder at his approach, while the beggars and the wretched kneel to him as their deliverer. He would of course understand so broad and fine a moral as this at any time.

and sat down, I recollect, by a well-side on the road, to cool ourselves and satisfy our thirst, when Coleridge repeated to me some descriptive lines from his tragedy of Remorse; which I must say became his mouth and that occasion better than they, some years after, did Mr. Elliston's and the Drury-lane boards,—

> 'Oh memory! shield me from the world's poor strife,
> And give those scenes thine everlasting life.'

I saw no more of him for a year or two, during which period he had been wandering in the Hartz Forest in Germany; and his return was cometary, meteorous, unlike his setting out. It was not till some time after that I knew his friends Lamb and Southey. The last always appears to me (as I first saw him) with a common-place book under his arm, and the first with a *bon-mot* in his mouth. It was at Godwin's that I met him with Holcroft and Coleridge, where they were disputing fiercely which was the best—*Man as he was, or man as he is to be.* 'Give me,' says Lamb, 'man as he is *not* to be.' This saying was the beginning of a friendship between us, which I believe still continues.—Enough of this for the present.

> 'But there is matter for another rhyme,
> And I to this may add a second tale.'

## PULPIT ORATORY—DR. CHALMERS AND MR. IRVING

*The Liberal.*] [1823.

The Scotch at present seem to bear the bell, and to have 'got the start of the majestic world.' They boast of the greatest novelists, the greatest preachers, the greatest philanthropists, and the greatest blackguards in the world. Sir Walter Scott stands at the head of these for Scotch humour, Dr. Chalmers for Scotch logic, Mr. Owen for Scotch Utopianism, and Mr. Blackwood for Scotch impudence. Unrivalled four! Nay, here is Mr. Irving, who threatens to make a fifth, and *stultify* all our London orators, from 'kingly Kensington' to Blackwall! Who has not heard of him? Who does not go to hear him? You can scarcely move along for the coronet-coaches that besiege the entrance to the Caledonian chapel in Hatton-garden; and when, after a prodigious squeeze, you get in so as to have standing-room, you see in the same undistinguished crowd Brougham and Mackintosh, Mr. Peel and Lord Liverpool, Lord Landsdown and Mr. Coleridge. Mr. Canning and Mr. Hone are pew fellows. Mr. Waithman frowns stern applause, and Mr. Alderman Wood

does the honours of the Meeting! The lamb lies down with the lion, and the Millennium seems to be anticipated in the Caledonian chapel, under the new Scotch preacher. Lords, ladies, sceptics, fanatics, join in approbation,—some admire the doctrine, others the sound, some the picturesque appearance of the orator, others the grace of action, some the ingenuity of the argument, others the beauty of the style or the bursts of passion, some even go so far as to patronize a certain *brackish* infusion of the Scottish dialect, and a slight defect of vision. Lady Bluemount declares it to be only inferior to the EXCURSION in imagination, and Mr. Botherby cries—'Good, good!' The 'Talking Potato'[1] and Mr. Theodore Flash have not yet been.

Mr. Irving appears to us the most accomplished barbarian, and the least offensive and most dashing clerical holder-forth we remember to have seen. He puts us in mind of the first man, Adam, if Adam had but been a Scotchman, and had had coal black hair. He seems to stand up in the integrity of his composition, to begin a new race of practising believers, to give a new impulse to the Christian religion, to regenerate the fallen and degenerate race of man. You would say he had been turned out of the hands of Nature and the Schools a perfect piece of workmanship. See him in the street, he has the air, the free swing, the *bolt upright* figure of an Indian savage, or a northern borderer dressed in canonicals: set him in the pulpit, and he is armed with all the topics, a master of fence, the pupil of Dr. Chalmers! In action he has been compared to Kean; in the union of external

[1] Some years ago, a periodical paper was published in London, under the title of the PIC-NIC. It was got up under the auspices of a Mr. Fulke Greville, and several writers of that day contributed to it, among whom were Mr. Horace Smith, Mr. Dubois, Mr. Prince Hoare, Mr. Cumberland, and others. On some dispute arising between the proprietor and the gentlemen-contributors on the subject of an advance in the remuneration for articles, Mr. Fulke Greville grew heroic, and said, 'I have got a young fellow just come from Ireland, who will undertake to do the whole, verse and prose, politics and scandal, for two guineas a week, and if you will come and sup with me to-morrow night, you shall see him, and judge whether I am not right in closing with him.' Accordingly, they met the next evening, and the WRITER OF ALL WORK was introduced. He began to make a display of his native ignorance and impudence on all subjects immediately, and no one else had occasion to say any thing. When he was gone, Mr. Cumberland exclaimed, 'A talking potato, by God!' The talking potato was Mr. Croker, of the Admiralty. Our adventurer shortly, however, returned to his own country, and passing accidentally through a town where they were in want of a ministerial candidate at an Election, the gentleman of modest assurance offered himself, and succeeded. 'They wanted a Jack-pudding,' said the father of the hopeful youth, 'and so they chose my son.' The case of the Duke of York and Mrs. Clarke soon after came on, and Mr. Croker, who is a dabbler in dirt, and an adept in love-letters, rose from the affair Secretary to the Admiralty, and the very 'rose and expectancy of the fair State.'

and intellectual advantages, we might start a parallel for him in the admirable Crichton. He stands before Haydon's picture of Lazarus, and says, 'Look at me!' He crosses Piccadilly, and clears Bond-street of its beaux! Rob Roy, Macbriar is come again. We saw him stretched on a bench at the Black Bull in Edinburgh,—we met him again at a thirteen-penny ordinary in London, in the same attitude, and said, without knowing his calling, or his ghostly parts, 'That is the man for a fair saint.' We swear it by

> 'His foot mercurial; his martial thigh;
> The brawns of Hercules, but his jovial face!'

Aye, there we stop like Imogen—there is a want of expression in it. 'The iron has not entered his soul.' He has not dared to feel but in trammels and in dread. He has read Werter but to criticise him; Rousseau, but to steel himself against him; Shakespear, but to quote him; Milton, but to round his periods. Pleasure, fancy, humanity, are syrens that he repels and keeps at arms-length; and hence his features are hardened, and have a barbaric crust upon them. They are not steeped in the expression of Titian or Raphael; but they would do for Spagnoletti to paint, and his dark profile and matted locks have something of the grave commanding appearance of Leonardo da Vinci's massive portraits.

Dr. Chalmers is not so good-looking a man as Mr. Irving; he wants the same vigour and spirit. His face is dead and clammy, cold, pale, bloodless, passionless, and there is a glazed look of insincerity about the eyes, uninformed, uninspired from within. His voice is broken, harsh, and creaking, while Mr. Irving's is flowing and silvery: his Scotch accent and pronunciation are a terrible infliction on the *uncultivated* ear. His 'Whech observation I *oo*rge upon you my fr*i*nds and br*ee*thren' desolates and lays waste all the humanities. He grinds out his sentences between his teeth, and catches at truth with his fists, as a monkey catches an apple or a stick thrown at him with his paws. He seems by his action and his utterance to say to difficulties, 'Come, let me clutch thee,' and having got them in his grasp, tears and rends them in pieces as a dog tears an old rag to tatters or mumbles a stone that is flung in his way. Dr. Chalmers engages attention and secures sympathy solely by the intensity of his own purpose: there is neither eloquence nor wisdom, neither imagination nor feeling, neither the pomp of sound nor grace nor solemnity of manner about him, but he is in earnest, and eager in pursuit of his argument, and arrests the eye and ear of his congregation by this alone. He dashes head foremost into the briars and thorns of controversy, and drags you along with him whether you will or no, and

your only chance is to push on and get out of them as well as you can, though dreadfully scratched and almost blinded. He involves you in a labyrinth, and you are anxious to escape from it: you have to pass through many a dark, subterranean cavern with him in his theological ferry-boat, and are glad enough to get out on the other side, with the help of Scotch logic for oars, and Scotch rhetoric for sails! You hear no *home* truths, nothing that touches the heart, or swells or expands the soul; there is no tide of eloquence lifting you up to Heaven, or wafting you from Indus to the Pole.—No, you are detained in a canal, with a great number of *locks* in it.—You make way by virtue of standing still, your will is irritated, and impelled forward by stoppages—you are puzzled into sympathy, pulled into admiration, tired into patience! The preacher starts a difficulty, of which you had no notion before, and you stare to see how he will answer it. He first makes you uneasy, sceptical, sensible of your helplessness and dependence upon his superior sagacity and recondite learning, and proportionably thankful for the relief he affords you in the unpleasant dilemma to which you have been reduced. It is like proposing a riddle, and then, after playing with the curiosity and impatience of the company for some time, giving the solution, which nobody else has the wit to find out. We never saw fuller attendances or more profound attention than at the Tron Church in Glasgow—it was like a sea of eyes, a swarm of heads, gaping for mysteries, and staring for elucidations—it was not the sublime or beautiful; the secret was that which has been here explained, a desire to get rid of the difficult, the disagreeable, the dry, and the discordant matter that had been conjured up in the imagination. Dr. Chalmers, then, succeeds by the force of sophistry and casuistry, in our humble judgment. Riddles (of which we spoke just now) are generally traditional: those that Dr. Chalmers unfolds from the pulpit, are of his own invention, or at least promulgation. He started an objection to the Christian religion (founded on its supposed inconsistency with the Newtonian philosophy) which objection had never been noticed in books, on purpose that he might answer it. 'Well,' said a Scotchman, 'and if the answer was a good one, was he not right?' 'No, assuredly,' we should answer, 'for there is no faith so firm as that which has never been called in question.' The answer could only satisfy those who had been unsettled by the question; and there would be many who would not be convinced by the Doctor's reasoning, however he might plume himself on his success. We suspect that this is looking after a reputation for literary ingenuity and philosophical depth, rather than the peace of consciences or the salvation of souls; which, in a Christian minister, is unbecoming, and savours

of the Mammon of unrighteousness. We ourselves were staggered by the blow (either then or long before) and still gasp for a reply, notwithstanding Dr. Chalmers's nostrum. Let the reader briefly judge:—The Doctor tells us, it may be said, that the Christian Dispensation supposes that the counsels of God turn upon this world as its center; that there is a heaven above and an earth beneath; and that man is the lord of the universe, the only creature made in the divine likeness, and over whom Providence watches, and to whom revelations are given, and an inheritance everlasting. This agrees with the cosmogony of Moses, which makes the earth the center of all things, and the sun, moon, and stars, little shining spots like silver sixpences moving round it. But it does not so well agree with Newton's *Principia* (we state Dr. Chalmers's objection) which supposes the globe we inhabit to be but a point in the immensity of the universe; that ours is but one, and that the most insignificant (perhaps) among innumerable worlds, filled, probably, with created intelligences, rational and fallen souls, that share the eye of God with us, and who require to know that their Redeemer liveth. We alone (it would appear) cannot pretend to monopolize heaven or hell: there are other contingent candidates besides us. Jacob's dream was poetical and natural, while the earth was supposed to be a flat surface and the blue sky hung over it, to which angels might ascend by a ladder, and the face of God be seen at the top, as his lofty and unchangeable abode; but this beautiful episode hardly accords with the Antipodes. Sir Isaac turned the world upon its back, and divided heaven from itself, and removed it far from every one of us. As we thought the universe turned round the earth as its pivot, so religion turned round man as its center, as the sole, important, moral and accountable agent in existence. But there are other worlds revolving in infinite space, to which this is a speck. Are they all desert, worthless? Were they made for us? Have they no especial dispensations of life and light? Have we alone a God, a Saviour, revealed to us? Is religion triumphant only here, or is it itinerant through each? It can hardly seem that we alone have occupied the thoughts or been the sole objects of the plans of infinite wisdom from eternity—that our life, resurrection, and judgment to come, are the whole history of a wide-seeing Providence, or the loftiest events in the grand drama of the universe, which was got up as a theatre only for us to perform our petty parts in, and then to be cast, most of us, into hell fire? Dr. Chalmers's Astronomical Discourses indeed may be said to dwarf his mighty subject, and make mankind a very Lilliputian race of beings, which this Gulliver in vain dandles in the hard, broad, brawny hand of school divinity, and tries to lift into their

bigotted self-sufficiency and exclusive importance again. How does he answer his own objection, and turn the tables on himself—how reverse this pitiful, diminished perspective, and aggrandise us in our own estimation once more as undoubted heirs of heaven or of hell—the sole favoured or reprobated sons of God? Why, his answer is this—that the microscope has done as much to lift man in the scale of being, and to enlarge the bounds of this atom the earth, as the telescope has done to circumscribe and lessen it; that there are infinite gradations BELOW man, worlds within worlds, as there are pegrees of being above, and stars and suns blazing round each other; that, for what we know, a speck, a lucid drop circulating in a flea's back, may be another habitable globe like this!—And has that, too, a revelation of its own, an avenging God, and a Christ crucified? Does every particle in a flea's back contain a Mosaic dispensation, a Popish and a Protestant religion? Has it its Tron Church and its Caledonian Chapel, and Dr. Chalmers's Discourses and Mr. Irving's Orations in little? This does not seem to obviate the difficulty, but to increase it a million-fold. It is his objection and his answer to it, not ours: if blasphemy, it is his; and, if orthodoxy, he is entitled to all the credit of it. But his whole scheme shows how impossible it is to reconcile the faith delivered to the saints with the subtleties and intricacies of metaphysics. It displays more pride of intellect than simplicity of heart, is an insult equally on the understandings or prejudices of men, and could only have been hit upon by that personification and abstraction of cross-purposes, a Scotch metaphysical divine. In his general preaching, Dr. Chalmers is a great casuist, and a very indifferent moralist. He states the *pros* and *cons* of every question with extreme pertinacity, and often 'spins the thread of his verbosity finer than the staple of his argument.' He assigns possible reasons, not practical motives, for conduct; and vindicates the ways of God, and his own interpretation of the Scriptures, to the head, not to the heart. The old school-divines set this practice afoot; for being accustomed to hear the secrets of confession, and to salve the tender consciences of the great and powerful, they had to bandy all sorts of questions about; and if they could find out 'a loop or peg to hang a doubt on,' were well rewarded for their trouble; they were constantly reduced to their shifts, and forced to go on the forlorn hope of morality by the ticklish cases referred to them for arbitration; and when they had exhausted the resources of humanity and natural sentiment, endeavoured to find new topics within the range of abstract reason and possibility. Dr. Chalmers's reasoning is as unlike as possible to a chapter in the Gospels: but he may do very well to comment on the Apocalypse or an Epistle of St. Paul's. We do

not approve of this method of carving out excuses or defences of doctrinal points from the dry parchment of the understanding or the cobwebs of the brain. Whatever sets or leaves the dogmas of religion at variance with the dictates of the heart, hardens the last, and lends no advantage to the first.

Mr. Irving is a more amiable moralist, and a more practical reasoner. He throws a glancing, pleasing light over the gloomy ground of Calvinism. There is something humane in his appeals, striking in his apostrophes, graceful in his action, soothing in the tones of his voice. He is not affected and theatrical; neither is he deeply impassioned or overpowering from the simple majesty of his subject. He is above common-place both in fancy and argument; yet he can hardly rank as a poet or philosopher. He is a modernised covenanter, a sceptical fanatic. We do not feel exactly on sure ground with him—we scarcely know whether he preaches Christ crucified, or himself. His pulpit style has a resemblance to the *florid gothic*. We are a little *mystified* when a man with one hand brings us all the nice distinctions and air-drawn speculations of modern unbelievers, and arms the other with 'fire hot from Hell,'—when St. Paul and Jeremy Bentham, the Evangelists and the Sorrows of Werter, Seneca, Shakespear, the author of Caleb Williams and the Political Justice, are mingled together in the same passage, and quoted in the same breath, however eloquent that breath may be. We see Mr. Irving smile with decent scorn at this remark, and launch one more thunderbolt at the critics. He is quite welcome, and we should be proud of his notice. In the discourses he has lately delivered, and which have drawn crowds to admire them, he has laboured to describe the Sensual Man, the Intellectual Man, the Moral Man, and the Spiritual Man; and has sacrificed the three first at the shrine of the last. He gave certainly a terrific picture of the death-bed of the Sensual Man—a scene where few shine—but it is a good subject for oratory, and he made the most of it. He described the Poet well, walking by the mountain side, in the eye of nature—yet oppressed, panting rather than satisfied, with beauty and sublimity. Neither Fame nor Genius, it is most true, are all-sufficient to the mind of man! He made a fair hit at the Philosophers; first, at the Political Economist, who draws a circle round man, gives him so many feet of earth to stand upon, and there leaves him to starve in all his nobler parts and faculties: next, at the great Jurisconsult, who carves out a mosaic work of motives for him, cold, hard, and dry, and expects him to move mechanically in right lines, squares, and parallelograms, drills him into perfection, and screws him into utility. He then fell foul of the Moralist and Sentimentalist, weighed him in the balance

and found him wanting—deficient in clearness of sight to discern good, in strength of hand and purpose to seize upon it when discerned. But Religion comes at last to the aid of the Spiritual Man, couches the blind sight, and braces the paralytic limb; the Lord of Hosts is in the field, and the battle is won, his countenance pours light into our souls, and his hand stretched out imparts strength to us, by which we tower to our native skies! In treating of this subject, Mr. Irving introduced several powerful images and reflections, to show how feeble moral and intellectual motives are to contend with the allurements of sense and the example of the world. Reason alone, he said, was no more able to stem the tide of prejudice and fashion, than the swimmer with his single arm (here he used an appropriate and spirited gesture, which reminded us of the description of the heroic action of the swimmer in Sir Philip Sidney's Arcadia) is able to oppose the raging torrent, as the voice of conscience was only heard in the tumultuous scenes of life like the faint cry of the sea-bird in the wide world of waters. He drew an animated but mortifying sketch of the progress of the Patriot and Politician, weaned by degrees from his attachment to young Liberty to hug old Corruption; and showed (strikingly enough) that this change from youthful ardour to a hoary, heartless old age of selfishness and ridicule (there were several Members of the Honourable House present) was not owing to increased wisdom or strength of sight, but to faltering resolution and weakness of hand, that could no longer hold out against the bribes, the snares, and gilded chains prepared for it. The romantic Tyro was right and free, the callous Courtier was a slave and self-conceited. All this was true; it was honest, down-right, and well put. There was no cant in it, as far as regards the unequal odds and the hard battle that reason has to fight with pleasure, or ambition, or interest, or other antagonist motives. But does the objection apply to morality solely, or has not religion its share in it? Man is not what he ought to be—Granted; but is he not different from this ideal standard, in spite of religion as well as of morality? Is not the religious man often a slave to power, the victim of pleasure, the thrall of avarice, hard of heart, a sensual hypocrite, cunning, mercenary, miserable? If it be said that the really religious man is none of these, neither is the truly moral man. Real morality, as well as vital christianity, implies right conduct and consistent principle. But the question simply at issue is, whether the profession or the belief of sound moral opinion implies these; and it certainly does it no more than the profession or belief of orthodox religious opinions does. The conviction of the good or ill consequences of our actions in this life does not absolutely conform the will or the desires to good; neither does the

apprehension of future rewards or punishments produce this effect completely or necessarily. The candidate for Heaven is a backslider; the dread of eternal torments makes but a temporary impression on the mind. This is not a reason, in our judgment, for neglecting or giving up in despair the motives of religion or morality, but for strengthening and cultivating both. With Mr. Irving, it is a triumphant and unanswerable ground for discarding and denouncing morality, and for exalting religion, as the sovereign cure for all wounds, as the *thaumaturgos*, or wonder-worker, in the reform of mankind! We are at a loss to understand how this exclusive and somewhat intolerant view of the subject is reconcileable with sound reason or with history. Religion is no new experiment now first making on mankind; we live in the nineteenth century of the Christian æra; it is not as if we lived in the age of apostles, when we might (from novelty and inexperience of the intended dispensations of Providence) expect the earth to wear a new face, and darkness suddenly to flee away before the light of the gospel: nor do we apprehend that Mr. Irving is one of those who believe with Mr. Croly, that the millennium actually commenced with the battle of Waterloo; that event seems as far off, to all outward appearance, as it was two thousand years ago. What does this make against the doctrines of christianity? Nothing; if, as far as they are implanted and take root, they bear fruit accordingly, notwithstanding the repugnance and thanklessness of the soil. Why then is Mr. Irving so hard upon the labours of philosophers, moralists, and men of letters, because they do not do all their work at once? Bishop Butler indeed wrote a most able and learned quarto volume, to prove that the slow growth and imperfect influence of christianity was a proof of its divine origin, and that in this respect we had a right to look for a direct *analogy* between the operations of the world of grace and nature, both proceeding as they did from the same Almighty hands! Our deservedly popular preacher has, however, an answer to what we have here stated: he says, 'the time MUST and WILL shortly come!' We never contradict prophecies; we only speak to facts. In addressing himself to this point, Mr. Irving made a spirited digression to the Missionary Societies, and the impending propagation of the Gospel at home and abroad—all obstacles to it would speedily be surmounted:—'The Negro slave was not so enchained but that the Gospel would set him free; the Hottentot was not so benighted but that its light would penetrate to him; the South Sea Islander was not so indolent and voluptuous but that he would rouse himself at its call; neither the cunning of the Italian, nor the superstition of the Spaniard, nor the tameness of the German, nor the levity of the French, nor the buoyancy of the Irish, nor the indomitable pride of the English,

nor the *fiery manhood* of the Scotch, would be long able to withstand its all-pervading influence!' We confess, when our Caledonian pastor launched his canoe from the South Sea Isles and landed on European *terra firma*, taking measure of the vices of each nation that were opposed to the spirit of christianity, we did *prick up* our ears to know what fault he would, in due course of argument, find with his native country—it would go against the grain, no doubt, but still he had undertaken it, and he must speak out—When lo! for some sneaking vice or sordid pettifogging disposition, we have our own 'best virtue' palmed upon us as the only failing of the most magnanimous natives of the North—*fiery manhood*, quotha! The cold sweat of rankling malice, hypocrisy, and servility, would be nearer the mark—Eh! Sir Walter? Nay, good Mr. Blackwood, we meant no offence to you! 'Fiery manhood' is the Anti-Christian vice or virtue of the Scotch that meets true religion on the borders, and beats her back with suffocating breath! Is Christianity still then to be planted like oak timber in Scotland? What will Dr. Chalmers and the other labourers in the vineyard say to this?—'We pause for a reply!' The best and most impressive part of Mr. Irving's discourse (Sunday, the 22nd June) was that, in which he gave a very beautiful account of what Christianity had done, or rather might do, in aid of morality and the regeneration of the spirit of man. It had made 'corruption blossom,' 'annihilated time in the prospect of eternity,' and 'changed all nature, from a veil hiding the face of God, into a mirror reflecting his power and beneficence.' We do not, however, see why in the fervour of his enthusiasm he should affirm 'that Jesus Christ had destroyed melody,' nor why, by any allowed licence of speech, he should talk of 'the mouth of God being muzzled by man.' We might not perhaps have noticed this last expression, considering it as a slip of the tongue; but Mr. Irving preaches from written notes, and his style is, on the whole, polished and ambitious. We can conceive of a deeper strain of argument, of a more powerful and overwhelming flood of eloquence; but altogether we deem him an able and attractive expounder of Holy Writ; and farther, we believe him to be an honest man. We suspect there is a radical 'taint in him,' and that Mr. Canning will be advised to withdraw himself from the congregation. His strokes aimed at iniquity in high places are bold, unsparing, and repeated. We would however suggest to him the propriety of containing his indignation at the advancement of the secular priesthood by 'the powers that be;' it is a thing of course, and his impatience of their elevation may be invidiously construed into a jealousy of the spoil. When we compare Mr. Irving with some other preachers that we have heard, and

particularly with that crawling sycophant Daniel Wilson (who tendered his gratuitous submission to Nero the other day in the excess of his loyalty to George IV.) we are sorry that we have not been able to make our tribute of approbation unqualified as it is cordial, and to stifle *their* venal breath with the applauses bestowed upon *him*. 'Oh! for an *eulogy* to kill' all such with!

## ARGUING IN A CIRCLE

*The Liberal.*] [1823.

THERE was an account in the newspapers the other day of a fracas in the street, in which a Lord and one or two Members of Parliament were concerned. It availed them nought to plead the privilege of Peerage, or to have made speeches in the House—they were held to bail, like the vilest of the rabble, and the circumstance was not considered one to come before the public. Ah! it is that public that is the sad thing. It is the most tremendous ring that ever was formed to see fair play between man and man; it puts people on their good behaviour immediately; and wherever it exists, there is an end of the airs and graces which individuals, high in rank, and low in understanding and morals, may chuse to give themselves. While the affair is private and can be kept in a corner, personal fear and favour are the ruling principles, *might* prevails over *right*: but bring it before the world, and truth and justice stand some chance. The public is too large a body to be bribed or browbeat. Its voice, deep and loud, quails the hearts of princes: its breath would make the feather in a lord's cap bend and cower before it, if its glance, measuring the real magnitude of such persons with their lofty, tiptoe, flaunting pretensions, had not long since taken the feathers out of their caps. A lord is now dressed (oh! degenerate world) like any other man; and a watchman will no sooner let go his grasp of his plain collar than he will that of a Commoner or any other man, who has his 'fancies and good-nights.' What a falling off is here from the time when if a 'base cullionly fellow' had dared to lay hands on a nobleman, on 'one of quality,' he would have whipped his sword out of its scabbard and run him through the body; the 'beggarly, unmannered corse' would have been thrown into the Thames or the next ditch; and woe to any person that should have attempted to make a stir in the matter! 'The age of chivalry is gone, that of constables, legislators, and Grub-street writers, has succeeded, and the glory of heraldry is extinguished for ever.'

'The melancholy Jacques grieves at that.'

Poor Sir Walter! the times are changed indeed, since a Duke of Buckingham could send a couple of bullies, equipped in his livery, with swords and ribbons, to carry off a young lady from a Peveril of the Peak, by main force, in the face of day, and yet the bye-standers not dare to interfere, from a dread of the Duke's livery and the High Court of Star Chamber! It is no wonder that the present Duke of Buckingham (the old title new revived) makes speeches in the Upper House to prove that legitimate monarchs have a right, whenever they please, to run their swords through the heart of a nation and *pink* the liberties of mankind, thinking if this doctrine were once fully restored, the old times of his predecessor might come again,—

'New manners and the pomp of elder days!'

It is in tracing the history of private manners that we see (more than any thing else) the progress that has been made in public opinion and political liberty, and that may be still farther made. No one individual now sets up his will as higher than the law: no noble Duke or Baron bold acts the professed bully or glories in the character of a lawless ruffian, as a part of the etiquette and privileges of high rank: no gay, gaudy minion of the court takes the wall of the passengers, sword in hand, cuts a throat, washes his white, crimson-spotted hands, and then to dinner with the king and the ladies.—*That* is over with us at present; and while that is the case, Hampden will not have bled in the field, nor Sydney on the scaffold, in vain! Even the monarch in this country, though he is above the law, is subject to opinion; 'submits,' as Mr. Burke has it, both from choice and necessity, 'to the soft collar of social esteem, and gives a domination, vanquisher of laws, to be subdued by manners!'

It is this which drives the Despots of the Continent mad, and makes their nobles and chief vassals league together, like a herd of tygers, to destroy the example of liberty which we (the people of England) have set to the rest of the world. They are afraid that if this example should spread and things go on much farther in the road they have taken, they will no longer be able to give their subjects and dependants the *knout*, to send them to the galleys or a dungeon without any warrant but their own unbridled will, and that a lord or a king will be no more above the law than any other man. Mankind, in short, till lately and except in this country, were considered as a herd of deer which the privileged classes were to use for their pleasure, or which they were to hunt down for spite or sport, as liked them best. That they should combine together with a knot of obscure philosophers and hair-brained philanthropists, to set up a plea not to be used at any man's pleasure, or hunted down like vermin for any

man's sport, was an insult to be avenged with seas of blood, an attack upon the foundations of social order, and the very existence of all law, religion, and morality. In all the legitimate governments of Europe, there existed, and there still exist, a number of individuals who were exempted (by birth and title) from the law, who could offer every affront to religion, and commit every outrage upon morality with impunity, with insolence and loud laughter, and who pretended that in asserting this monstrous privilege of theirs to the very letter, the essence of all law, religion, and morality consisted. This was the case in France till the year 1789. The only law was the will of the rich to insult and harass the poor, the only religion a superstitious mummery, the only morality subserviency to the pleasures of the great. In the mild reign of Louis xv. only, there were fifteen thousand *lettres de cachet* issued for a number of private, nameless offences, such as the withholding a wife or daughter from the embraces of some man of rank, for having formerly received favours from a king's mistress, or writing an epigram on a Minister of State. It was on the ruins of this flagitious system (no less despicable than detestable) that the French Revolution rose; and the towers of the Bastille, as they fell, announced the proud truth in welcome thunder to the human race—to all but those who thought they were born, and who only wished to live, to exercise their sweeping, wholesale, ruthless tyranny, or to vent the workings of their petty, rankling spleen, pride, bigotry, and malice, in endless, tormenting details on their fellow-creatures.

It will, I conceive, hereafter be considered as the greatest enormity in history, the stupidest and the most barefaced insult that ever was practised on the understandings or the rights of men, that we should interfere in this quarrel between liberty and slavery, take the wrong side, and endeavour to suppress the natural consequences of that very example of freedom we had set. That we should do this, we who had 'long insulted the slavery of Europe by the loudness of our boasts of freedom,' who had laughed at the *Grand Monarque* for the last hundred and fifty years, and treated his subjects with every indignity, as belonging to an inferior species to ourselves, for submitting to his cruel and enervated sway; that the instant they took us at our word and were willing to break the chains of Popery and Slavery that we never ceased to taunt them with, we should turn against them, stand passive by 'with jealous leer malign,' witnessing the machinations of despots to extinguish the rising liberties of the world, and with the first plausible protest, the first watch-word given (the blow aimed at the head of a king confederate with the enemies of his country against its freedom) should join the warwhoop, and

continue it loudest and longest, and never rest, under one hollow, dastard, loathsome pretence or other, till we had put down 'the last example of democratic rebellion' (we, who are nothing but rebellion all over, from the crown of the head to the sole of the foot!) and had restored the doctrine of Divine Right, that had fallen headless from its throne of Ignorance and Superstition with the First Charles, long before it was condemned to the same fate in the person of the French king; that we should do this, and be led, urged on to the unhallowed task by a descendant of the House of Brunswick, who held his crown in contempt of the Stuarts, and grew old, blind, and crazed in the unsated, undiverted, sacred thirst of Legitimacy, is a thing that posterity will wonder at. We pretend to have interfered to put down the horrors of the French Revolution, when it was our interference (with that of others) that produced those horrors, of which we were glad as an excuse to justify our crooked policy and to screen the insidious, deadly, fatal blow aimed at liberty. No; the 'cause was hearted' in the breasts of those who reign, or who would reign, in contempt of the people, and with whom it rests to make peace or war. Is not the same principle at work still? What horrors have the *Holy* Alliance to plead in vindication of their interference with Spain? They have not a rag, a thread of all their hideous tissue of sophistry and lies to cover 'the open and apparent shame' of this sequel and consistent comment on their former conduct. It is a naked, barefaced, undisguised attack upon the rights and liberties of the world: it is putting the thing upon its true and proper footing—the claim of Kings to hold mankind as a property in perpetuity. There are no horrors, real or pretended, to warrant this new outrage on common sense and human nature. It stands on its own proud basis of injustice—it towers and mocks the skies in all the majesty of regal wrong. 'The shame, the blood be upon their heads.' If there are no horrors ready-made to their hands, they stand upon their privilege to commit wanton outrage and unqualified aggression; and if by these means they can provoke horrors, then the last are put first as the most plausible plea, as a handsome mask and soft lining to the hard gripe and features of Legitimacy—Religion consecrates, and Loyalty sanctions the fraud! But, should the scheme fail in spite of every art and effort, and the wrong they have meditated be retorted on their own heads, then we shall have, as before, an appeal made to Liberty and Humanity—the motto of despots will once more be *peace on earth and good will to men*—and we too shall join in the yell of blood and the whine of humanity. We are only waiting for an excuse now—till the threats and insults and cruelties of insolent invaders call forth reprisals, and lead to some

act of popular fury or national justice that shall serve as a signal to rouse the torpid spirit of trade in the city, or to inflame the loyalty of country gentlemen deaf for the present to all other sounds but that appalling one of RENT! We must remain neuter while a grievous wrong is acting, unless we can get something by the change, or pick a quarrel with the right. We are peaceable, politic, when a nation's liberty only is at stake, but were it a monarch's crown that hung tottering in the air, oh! how soon would a patriot senate and people start out to avenge the idle cause: a single speech from the throne would metamorphose us into martyrs of self-interest, saviours of the world, deliverers of Europe from lawless violence and unexampled wrong. But here we have no heart to stir, because the name of liberty alone (without the cant of loyalty) has lost its magic charm on the ears of Englishmen—impotent to save, powerful only to betray and destroy themselves and others!

We want a Burke to give the thing a legitimate turn at present. I am afraid the Editor of the *New Times* can hardly supply his place. They could hardly have done before, without that eloquent apostate, that brilliant sophist, to throw his pen into the scale against truth and liberty. He varnished over a bad cause with smooth words, and had power to 'make the worse appear the better reason'—the devil's boast! The madness of genius was necessary to second the madness of a court; his flaming imagination was the torch that kindled the smouldering fire in the inmost sanctuary of pride and power, and spread havoc, dismay, and desolation through the world. The light of his imagination, sportive, dazzling, beauteous as it seemed, was followed by the stroke of death. It so happens that I myself have played all my life with his forked shafts unhurt, because I had a metaphysical clue to carry off the noxious particles, and let them sink into the earth, like drops of water. But the English nation are not a nation of metaphysicians, or they would have detected, and smiled or wept over the glittering fallacies of this half-bred reasoner, but, at the same time, most accomplished rhetorician that the world ever saw. But they are perplexed by sophistry, stupified by prejudice, staggered by authority. In the way of common sense and practical inquiry, they do well enough; but start a paradox, and they know not what to make of it. They either turn from it altogether, or, if interest or fear give them motives to attend to it, are fascinated by it. They cannot analyze or separate the true from the *seeming* good. Mr. Pitt, with his deep-mouthed *common-places*, was able to follow in the same track, and fill up the cry; but he could not have given the tone to political feeling, or led on the chase with 'so musical a discord, such sweet thunder.' Burke strewed the flowers of his style over the rotten

carcase of corruption, and embalmed it in immortal prose: he contrived, by the force of artful invective and misapplied epithets, to persuade the people of England that Liberty was an illiberal, hollow sound; that humanity was a barbarous modern invention, that prejudices were the test of truth; that reason was a strumpet, and right a fiction. Every other view of the subject but his ('so well the tempter glozed') seemed to be without attraction, elegance, or refinement. Politics became poetry in his hands, his sayings passed like proverbs from mouth to mouth, and his descriptions and similes were admired and repeated by the fashionable and the fair. Liberty from thenceforward became a low thing: philosophy was a spring-nailed, velvet-pawed tyger-cat, with green eyes, watching its opportunity to dart upon its prey: humanity was a lurking assassin. The emblems of our cardinal and favourite virtues were overturned: the whole vocabulary of national watch-words was inverted or displaced. This was a change indeed in our style of thinking, more alarming than that in our calendar formerly: and this change was brought about by Mr. Burke, who softened down hard reasons in the crucible of his fancy, and who gave to his epithets the force of nick-names. Half the business was done by his description of the Queen of France. It was an appeal to all women of quality; to all who were, or would be thought, cavaliers or men of honour; to all who were admirers of beauty, or rank, or sex. Yet what it had to do with the question, it would be difficult to say. If a woman is handsome, it is well: but it is no reason why she should poison her husband, or betray a country. If, instead of being young, beautiful, and free of manners, Marie Antoinette had been old, ugly, and chaste, all this mischief had been prevented. The author of the Reflections had seen or dreamt he saw a most delightful vision sixteen years before, which had thrown his brain into a ferment; and he was determined to throw his readers and the world into one too. It was a theme for a copy of verses, or a romance; not for a work in which the destinies of mankind were to be weighed. Yet she was the Helen that opened another Iliad of woes; and the world has paid for that accursed glance at youthful beauty with rivers of blood. If there was any one of sufficient genius now to deck out some Castilian maid, or village girl in the Army of the Faith, in all the colours of fancy, to reflect her image in a thousand ages and hearts, making a saint and a martyr of her; turning loyalty into religion, and the rights and liberties of the Spanish nation, and of all other nations, into a mockery, a bye-word, and a bugbear, how soon would an end be put to Mr. Canning's present *bizarre* (almost afraid to know itself) situation! How gladly he would turn round on the

pivot of his forced neutrality, and put all his drooping tropes and figures on their splendid war-establishment again!

Mr. Burke was much of a theatrical man. I do not mean that his high-wrought enthusiasm or vehemence was not natural to him; but the direction that he gave to it, was exceedingly capricious and arbitrary. It was for some time a doubtful question which way he should turn with respect to the French Revolution, whether for or against it. His pride took the alarm, that so much had been done with which he had nothing to do, and that a great empire had been overturned with his favourite engines, wit and eloquence, while he had been reforming the 'turn-spit of the king's kitchen,' in set speeches far superior to the occasion. Rousseau and the Encyclopædists had lamentably got the start of him; and he was resolved to drag them back somehow by the heels, and bring what they had effected to an untimely end,—

'Undoing all, as all had never been.'

The 'Reflections on the French Revolution' was a spiteful and dastard but too successful attempt to *put a spoke in the wheels* of knowledge and progressive civilization, and throw them back for a century and a half at least. In viewing the change, in the prospects of society, in producing which he had only a slight and indirect hand by his efforts in the cause of American freedom, he seemed to say, with Iago in the play,—

'Though that their joy be joy,
Yet will I contrive
To throw such changes of vexations on it;
As it may lose some colour.'

He went beyond his own most sanguine hopes, but did not live to witness their final accomplishment, by seeing France literally 'blotted out of the map of Europe.' He died in the most brilliant part of Buonaparte's victorious and captain-like campaigns in Italy. If it could have been foreseen what an 'ugly customer' he was likely to prove, the way would have been to have bribed his vanity (a great deal stronger than his interest) over to the other side, by asking his opinion; and, indeed, he has thrown out pretty broad hints in the early stage of his hostility, and before the unexpected success of the French arms, and the whizzing arrows flung at him by his old friends and new antagonists had stung him to madness, that the great error of the National Assembly was in not having consulted able and experienced heads on this side the water, as to demolishing

the old, and constructing the new edifice. If he had been employed to lay the first stone, or to assist, by an inaugural dissertation, at the baptism of the new French Constitution, the fabric of the Revolution would thenceforth have risen,—

'Like an exhalation of rich distilled perfumery,'

without let or molestation from his tongue or pen. But he was overlooked. He was not called from his closet, or from his place in the House (where, it must be confessed, he was out of his place) to 'ride in the whirlwind and direct the storm'; and therefore he tried, like some malicious hag, to urge the veering gale into a hurricane; to dash the labouring vessel of the state in pieces, and make shipwreck of the eternal jewel of man's happiness, which it had on board—Liberty. The stores of practical and speculative knowledge which he had been for years collecting and digesting, and for which he had no use at home, were not called into play abroad. His genius had hitherto been always too mighty for the occasion; but here his utmost grasp of intellect would hardly have been sufficient to grapple with it. What an opportunity was lost! Something, therefore, was to be done, to relieve the galling sense of disappointed ambition and mortified self-consequence. Our political *Busy-body* turned *Marplot*; and maliciously, and like a felon, strangled the babe that he was not professionally called in to swaddle, and dandle, and bring to maturity. He had his revenge: but so must others have their's on his memory.

Burke was not an honest man. There was always a *dash* of insincerity, a sinister bias in his disposition. We see, from the letters that passed between him and his two brothers, and Barry the painter, that there was constantly a balancing of self-interest and principle in his mind; a thanking of God that he was in no danger of yielding to temptation, yet as if it were a doubtful or ticklish point; and a patient, pensive expectation of place and emolument, till he could reconcile it with integrity and fidelity to his party; which might easily be construed into a querulous hankering after it, and an opinion that this temporary self-denial implied a considerable sacrifice on his part, or that he displayed no small share of virtue in not immediately turning knave. All this, if narrowly looked into, has a very suspicious appearance. Burke, with all his capricious wildness and flighty impulses, was a self-seeker and more constant in his enmities than in his friendships. He bore malice, and did not forgive to the last. His cold, sullen behaviour to Fox, who shed tears when they had a quarrel in the House, and his refusal to see him afterwards, when the latter came to visit him on his death-bed,

will for ever remain a stigma on his memory. He was, however, punished for his fault. In his latter writings, he complains bitterly of the solitariness of his old age, and of the absence of the friends of his youth—whom he had deserted. This is natural justice, and the tribute due to apostacy. A man may carry over his own conscience to the side of his vanity or interest, but he cannot expect, at the same time, to carry over along with him all those with whom he has been connected in thought and action, and whose society he will miss, sooner or later. Mr. Burke could hardly hope to find, in his casual, awkward, unaccountable intercourse with such men as Pitt or Dundas, amends for the loss of his old friends, Fox and Sheridan, to whom he was knit not only by political ties, but by old habitudes, lengthened recollections, and a variety of common studies and pursuits. Pitt was a mere politician; Dundas, a mere worldling. What would they care about him, and his 'winged words'? *No more of talk* about the meetings at Sir Joshua's—the *Noctes cænæque Deûm*; about the fine portraits of that great colourist; about Johnson or Goldsmith, or Dunning or Barrè; or their early speeches; or the trying times in the beginning of the American war; or the classic taste and free-born spirit of Greece and Rome;—

'The beautiful was vanish'd, and return'd not.'

Perhaps, indeed, he would wish to forget most of these, as ungrateful topics; but when a man seeks for repose in oblivion of himself, he had better seek it, where he will soonest find it,—in the grave! Whatever the talents, or the momentary coincidence of opinion of his new allies, there would be a want of previous sympathy between them. Their notions would not amalgamate, or they would not be sure that they did. Every thing would require to be explained, to be reconciled. There would be none of the freedom of habitual intimacy. Friendships, like the clothes we wear, become the easier from custom. New friendships do not sit well on old or middle age. Affection is a science, to which it is too late to serve an apprentice-ship after a certain period of life. This is the case with all patched-up, conventional intimacies; but it is worse when they are built on inveterate hostility and desertion from an opposite party, where their naturally crude taste is embittered by jealousy and rankling wounds. We think to exchange old friends and connections for new ones, and to be received with an additional welcome for the sacrifice we have made; but we gain nothing by it but the contempt of those whom we have left, and the suspicions of those whom we have joined. By betraying a cause, and turning our backs on a principle, we forfeit the esteem of the honest, and do not inspire one particle of

confidence or respect in those who may profit by and pay us for our treachery.

Deserters are never implicitly trusted. There is, besides the sentiment or general principle of the thing, a practical reason for this. Their zeal, their eagerness to distinguish themselves in their new career, makes them rash and extravagant; and not only so, but there is always a leaven of their old principles remaining behind, which breaks out in spite of themselves, and which it is difficult for their encouragers and patrons to guard against. This was remarkably the case with the late Mr. Windham. He was constantly *running a-muck* at some question or other, and committing the Ministers. His old, free-thinking, opposition habits returned upon him before he was aware of it; and he was sure to hazard some paradox, or stickle for some objectionable point, contrary to the forms of office. The cabinet had contemplated no such thing. He was accordingly kept in check, and alarmed the treasury-bench whenever he rose. He was like a dog that gives mouth before the time, or is continually running on a stray scent: he was chid and fed! The same thing is observable in the present Poet-Laureat, whose jacobinical principles have taken such deep root in him (*intus et in cute*) that they break out even in his Court poems, like 'a thick scurf' on loyalty; and he presents them unconsciously, (as an offering of 'sweet smelling gums,') at the very foot of the throne. He at present retains his place apparently on condition of holding his tongue. He writes such Odes on kings, that it is next to impossible not to travestie them into lampoons!

The remarks I have made above apply strongly to him and some of his associates of the *Lake School.* I fancy he has felt, as much as anyone, the inconvenience of drawing off from a cause, and that by so doing we leave our oldest and our best friends behind. There are those among the favourers and admirers of his youth, whom his dim eyes discover not, and who do not count his grey hairs. Not one or two, but more;—men of character and understanding, who have pledged mutual faith, and drank the cup of freedom with him, warm from the wine-press, as well as the 'dews of Castilie.' He gave up a principle, and one left him;—he insulted a feeling, and another fled; he accepted a place, and received the congratulations of no one but Mr. Croker. He looks round for them in vain, with throbbing heart, (the heart of a poet can never lie still; he should take the more care what it is that agitates it!)—sees only the shadows or the carcases of old friendships; or stretches out his hand to grasp some new patron, and finds that also cold. If our friends are sometimes accused of short memories, our enemies make it up by

having long ones. We had better adhere to the first; for we must despair of making cordial converts of the last. This double desolation is cheerless, and makes a man bethink himself. We may make a shift (a shabby one) without our self-respect; but it will never do to have it followed by the loss of the respect of those whose opinion we once valued most. We may tamper with our own consciences; but we feel at a loss without the testimony of others in our favour, which is seldom paid, except to integrity of purpose and principle. Perhaps, however, Mr. Southey consoles himself for a certain void without and within, by receiving the compliments of some Undergraduate of either of our Universities, on his last article in defence of Rotten Boroughs, in the Quarterly Review; or of a Dignitary of the Church, on his share in the Six Acts, and for suggesting to Lord Sidmouth the propriety of punishing the second conviction for libel with banishment. We do not know how this may be: but with us, it would barb the dart.

It would not matter, if these turn-coats were not in such violent extremes. Between the two, they must be strangely perplexed in their own minds, and scarcely know what to make of themselves. They must have singular qualms come over them at times—the apparitions of former acquaintance and opinions. If they were contented to correct, to qualify their youthful extravagancies, and to be taught by experience to steer a middle course, and pay some deference to the conclusions of others, it would be mighty well; but this is not their humour. They must be conspicuous, dogmatical, exclusive, intolerant, on whichever side they are: the mode may be different, the principle is the same. A man's nature does not change, though he may profess different sentiments. A Socinian may become a Calvinist, or a Whig a Tory: but a bigot is always a bigot; an egotist never becomes humble. Besides, what excuse has a man, after thirty, to change about all of a sudden to the very opposite side? If he is an uneducated man, he may indeed plead ignorance yesterday of what he has learnt today: but a man of study and reading can't pretend that a whole host of arguments has suddenly burst upon him, of which he never heard before, and that they have upset all his earlier notions: he must have known them long before, and if they made no impression on him then to modify his violent zeal (supposing them to be right now) it is a sign either of a disinclination, or of an incapacity, on his part, to give truth a fair hearing—a bad ground to build his present dogmatical and infallible tone upon! It is certain, that the common sense of the world condemns these violent changes of opinion; and if they do not prove that a man prefers his convenience to his virtue, they at least show that he

prefers it to his reputation; for he loses his character by them. An apostate is a name that all men abhor, that no man ever willingly acknowledges; and the tergiversation which it denotes is not likely to come into much greater request, till it is no longer observed that a man seldom changes his principles except for his interest! Those who go over from the winning to the losing side, do not incur this appellation; and however we may count them fools, they can't be called knaves into the bargain.

## QUERIES AND ANSWERS; OR THE RULE OF CONTRARY

*The London Weekly Review.*] [*November* 17, 1827.

1. Why is the word *comfort* so continually in the mouths of the English?—Because the English are the most uncomfortable of all people: for being so liable to receive pain from outward objects, and being made uneasy by everything that is not as they wish it, they are obliged to remove, if possible, every source of annoyance, and have *all their comforts about them.*

2. Why are the English so fond of clubs, corporate bodies, joint-stock companies, and large associations of all kinds?—Because they are the most unsociable set of people in the world: for being mostly at variance with each other, they are glad to get any one else to join and be on their side; having no spontaneous attraction, they are forced to fasten themselves into the machine of society; and each holds out in his individual shyness and reserve, till he is carried away by the crowd, and borne with a violent, but welcome shock against some other mass of aggregate prejudice or self-interest. The English join together to get rid of their sharp points and sense of uncomfortable peculiarity. Hence, their clubs, their mobs, their sects, their parties, their spirit of co-operation, and previous understanding in every thing. An English mob is a collection of violent and headstrong humours, acting with double force from each man's natural self-will, and the sense of opposition to others; and the same may be said of the nation at large. The French unite and separate more easily; and therefore do not collect into such formidable masses, and act with such unity and tenacity of purpose. It is the same with their ideas, which easily join together, and easily part company; but do not form large or striking masses: and hence, the French are full of wit and fancy, but without imagination and principle. The French are governed by fashion, the English by cabal.

3. Why are the English a credulous nation, and the eager dupes of all sorts of quacks and impostors?—Because they are a dry, plodding, *matter-of-fact* people, and having, in general, no idea of the possibility of telling lies, think all they hear or read must be true, and are left at the mercy of every empiric or knavish pretender, who will take the trouble to impose on them. From their very gravity and seriousness, they are the dupes of superficial professions and appearances, which they think, (judging from themselves,) must imply all they pretend. Their folly and love of the marvellous takes a practical and mischievous turn; they despise the fictitious, and require to be amused by something that they think solid and useful. Hence, they swallow Dr. Brodum's pills, Joanna Southcote's prophecies, the Literary Gazette, and Blackwood's Magazine, taking them all for gospel. They constantly have a succession of idols or bug-bears. There is always some one to be hunted down at the time for their amusement, like a strange dog in a village; and some name, some work that is cried up for half-a-dozen years, as containing all wisdom, and then you hear no more of it. No people judge so much as the English at second-hand, except in mere matters of pounds, shillings, and pence; and even then they may be gulled by impudence and quackery. Every thing is either in collusion or collision. *Thimble* was a great man in the O. P. Row, and now regulates the debates in Parliament. If a man has a monstrous good opinion of himself, and nothing will drive him out of it, the English will come into his way of thinking, sooner than be left in a *minority*, or not appear to be in the secret! Lest they should seem stupid, they try to be *knowing*, as they become forward in aiming to be witty, and vulgar in affecting to be genteel.

## ON KNOWLEDGE OF THE WORLD

*The London Weekly Review.*] [*December* 1, 1827.

'Who shall go about to cozen fortune, or wear the badge of honour without the stamp of merit?'

A KNOWLEDGE of the world is generally supposed to be the fruit of experience and observation, or of a various, practical acquaintance with men and things. On the contrary, it appears to me to be a kind of instinct, arising out of a peculiar construction and turn of mind. Some persons display this knowledge at their first outset in life: others, with all their opportunities and dear-bought lessons, never acquire it to the end of their career. In fact, a knowledge of the world only means a knowledge of our own interest; it is nothing but

a species of selfishness or ramification of the law of self-preservation. There may be said to be two classes of people in the world, which remain for ever distinct: those who consider things in the abstract, or with a reference to the truth, and those who consider them only with a reference to themselves, or to the *main chance*. The first, whatever may be their acquirements or discoveries, wander through life in a sort of absence of mind, or comparative state of sleep-walking: the last, though their attention is riveted to a single point of view, are always on the alert, know perfectly well what they are about, and calculate with the greatest nicety the effect which their words or actions will have on others. They do not trouble themselves about the arguments on any subject: they know the opinion entertained on it, and that is enough for them to regulate themselves by; the rest they regard as quite Utopian, and foreign to the purpose. 'Subtle as the fox for prey, like warlike as the wolf for what they eat,' they leave mere speculative points to those who, from some unaccountable bias or caprice take an interest in what does not personally concern them, and make good the old saying, that 'the children of the world are wiser in their generation than the children of the light!'

The man of the world is to the man of science very much what the chamelion is to the armadillo: the one takes its hue from every surrounding object, and is undistinguishable from them; the other is shut up in a formal crust of knowledge, and clad in an armour of proof, from which the shaft of ridicule or the edge of disappointment falls equally pointless. It is no uncommon case to see a person come into a room, which he enters awkwardly enough, and has nothing in his dress or appearance to recommend him, but after the first embarrassments are over, sits down, takes his share in the conversation, in which he acquits himself creditably, shews sense, reading, and shrewdness, expresses himself with point, articulates distinctly, when he blunders on some topic which he might see is disagreeable, but persists in it the more as he finds others shrink from it; mentions a book of which you have not heard, and perhaps do not wish to hear, and he therefore thinks himself bound to favour you with the contents; gets into an argument with one, proses on with another on a subject in which his hearer has no interest; and when he goes away, people remark, 'What a pity that Mr. —— has not more knowledge of the world, and has so little skill in adapting himself to the tone and manners of society!' But will time and habit cure him of this defect? Never. He wants a certain *tact*, he has not a voluntary power over his ideas, but is like a person reading out of a book, or who can only pour out the budget of knowledge with which his brain is crammed in all places and companies alike. If you attempt to divert

his attention from the general subject to the persons he is addressing, you puzzle and stop him quite. He is a mere conversing automaton. He has not the *sense of personality*—the faculty of perceiving the effect (as well as the grounds) of his opinions; and how then should failure or mortification give it him? It must be a painful reflection, and he must be glad to turn from it; or after a few reluctant and unsuccessful efforts to correct his errors, he will try to forget or harden himself in them. Finding that he makes so slow and imperceptible a progress in amending his faults, he will take his swing in the opposite direction, will triumph and revel in his supposed excellences, will launch out into the wide, untrammelled field of abstract speculation, and silence envious sneers and petty cavils by force of argument and dint of importunity. You will find him the same character at sixty that he was at thirty; or should time soften down some of his asperities, and tire him of his absurdities as he has tired others, nothing will transform him into a man of the world, and he will die in a garret, or a paltry second-floor, from not having been able to acquire the art 'to see ourselves as others see us,' or to dress his opinions, looks, and actions in the smiles and approbation of the world. On the other hand, take a youth from the same town (perhaps a school-fellow, and the dunce of the neighbourhood); he has 'no figures, nor no fantasies which busy thought draws in the brains of men,' no preconceived notions by which he must square his conduct or his conversation, no dogma to maintain in the teeth of opposition, no Shibboleth to which he must force others to subscribe; the progress of science or the good of his fellow-creatures are things about which he has not the remotest conception, or the smallest particle of anxiety—

> 'His soul proud science never taught to stray
> Far as the solar walk, or milky way;'

all that he sees or attends to is the immediate path before him, or what can encourage or lend him a helping hand through it; his mind is a complete blank, on which the world may write its maxims and customs in what characters it pleases; he has only to study its humours, flatter its prejudices, and take advantage of its foibles; while walking the streets he is not taken up with solving an abstruse problem, but with considering his own and the appearance of others; instead of contradicting a patron, assents to all he hears; and in every proposition that comes before him asks himself only what he can get by it, and whether it will make him friends or enemies: such a one is said to possess great penetration and knowledge of the world, understands his place in society, gets on in it, rises from the counter to the

counting-house, from the dependant to be a partner, amasses a fortune, gains in size and respectability as his affairs prosper, has his town and country house, and ends with buying up half the estates in his native county!

The great secret of a knowledge of the world, then, consists in a subserviency to the will of others, and the primary motive to this attention is a mechanical and watchful perception of our own interest. It is not an art that requires a long course of study, the difficulty is in putting one's self apprentice to it. It does not surely imply any very laborious or profound inquiry into the distinctions of truth or falsehood, to be able to assent to whatever one hears; nor any great refinement of moral feeling, to approve of whatever has custom, power, or interest on its side. The only question is, 'Who is willing to do so?'—and the answer is, those who have no other faculties or pretensions, either to stand in the way of or to assist their progress through life. Those are slow to wear the livery of the world who have any independent resources of their own. It is not that the philosopher or the man of genius does not see and know all this, that he is not constantly and forcibly reminded of it by his own failure or the success of others, but he cannot stoop to practice it. He has a different scale of excellence and mould of ambition, which has nothing in common with current maxims and time-serving calculations. He is a moral and intellectual egotist, not a mere worldly-minded one. In youth, he has sanguine hopes and brilliant dreams, which he cannot sacrifice for sordid realities—as he advances farther in life, habit and pride forbid his turning back. He cannot bring himself to give up his best-grounded convictions to a blockhead, or his conscientious principles to a knave, though he might make his fortune by so doing. The rule holds good here as well as in another sense —'What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?' If his convictions and principles had been less strong, they would have yielded long ago to the suggestions of his interest, and he would have relapsed into the man of the world, or rather he would never have had the temptation or capacity to be any thing else. One thing that keeps men honest, as well as that confirms them knaves, is their incapacity to do any better for themselves than nature has done for them. One person can with difficulty speak the truth, as another lies with a very ill grace. After repeated awkward attempts to change characters, they each very properly fall back into their old *jog-trot* path, as best suited to their genius and habits.

There are individuals who make themselves and every one else uncomfortable by trying to be agreeable, and who are only to be

endured in their natural characters of blunt, plain-spoken people. Many a man would have turned rogue if he had known how. *Non ex quovis ligno fit Mercurius.* The modest man cannot be impudent if he would. The man of sense cannot play the fool to advantage. It is not the mere resolution to act a part that will enable us to do it, without a natural genius and fitness for it. Some men are born to be valets, as others are to be courtiers. There is the climbing *genus* in man as well as in plants. It is sometimes made a wonder how men of 'no mark or likelihood' frequently rise to court-preferment, and make their way against all competition. That is the very reason. They present no tangible point; they offend no feeling of self-importance. They are a perfect unresisting medium of patronage and favour. They aspire through servility; they repose in insignificance. A man of talent or pretension in the same circumstances would be kicked out in a week. A look that implied a doubt, a hint that suggested a difference of opinion, would be fatal. It is of no use, in parleying with absolute power, to dissemble, to suppress: there must be no feelings or opinions to dissemble or suppress. The artifice of the dependant is not a match for the jealousy of the patron: 'The soul must be subdued to the very quality of its lord.' Where all is annihilated in the presence of the sovereign, is it astonishing that *nothings* should succeed? Ciphers are as necessary in courts as eunuchs in seraglios.

## THE SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED

*The London Weekly Review.* [*December* 8, 1827,

I do not think Mr. Cobbett would succeed in an interview with the Prince. Bub Doddington said, 'he would not justify before his Sovereign,' even where his own character was at stake. I am afraid we could hardly reckon upon the same forbearance in Mr. Cobbett where his country's welfare was at stake, and where he had an opportunity of vindicating it. He might have a great deal of reason on his side; but he might forget, or seem to forget, that as the king is above the law, he is also above reason. Reason is but a suppliant at the foot of thrones, and waits for their approval or rebuke. *Salus populi suprema lex*—may be a truism anywhere else. If reason dares to approach them at all, it must be in the shape of deference and humility, not of headstrong importunity and selfwill. Instead of breathless awe, of mild entreaty, of humble remonstrance, it is Mr. Cobbett, who, upon very slight encouragement, would give the law, and the monarch who must kiss the rod. The upstart, the bully, and the dogmatist, would break out, and the King would assert him-

self. The reformer would be too full of his own opinion to allow an option even to Majesty, and the affair would have the same ending as that of the old ballad—

> 'Then the Queen overhearing what Betty did say,
> Would send Mr. Roper to take her away.'

As I have brought Mr. Cobbett in here by the neck and shoulders, I may add that I do not think he belongs properly to the class, either of philosophical speculators, or men of the world. He is a political humourist. He is too much taken up with himself either to attend to right reason, or to judge correctly of what passes around him. He mistakes strength of purpose and passion, not only for truth but for success. Because he can give fifty good reasons for a thing, he thinks it not only *ought* to be, but *must* be. Because he is swayed so entirely by his wishes and humours, he believes others will be ready to give up their prejudices, interests, and resentments to oblige him. He persuades himself that he is the fittest person to represent Westminster in parliament, and he considers this point (once proved) tantamount to his return. He knows no more of the disposition or sentiments of the people of Westminster than of the inhabitants of the moon (except from what he himself chooses to say or write of them), and it is this want of sympathy which, as much as anything, prevents his being chosen. The exclusive force and bigotry of his opinions deprives them of half their influence and effect, by allowing no toleration to others, and consequently setting them against him.

Mr. Cobbett seemed disappointed, at one time, at not succeeding in the character of a legacy-hunter. Why, a person to succeed in this character, ought to be a mere skin or bag to hold money, a place to deposit it in, a shadow, a deputy, a trustee who keeps it for the original owner—so that the transfer is barely nominal, and who, if he were to return from the other world, would modestly yield it up—one who has no personal identity of his own, no will to encroach upon or dispose of it otherwise than his patron would wish after his death—not a hairbrained egotist, a dashing adventurer, to squander, hector and flourish away with it in wild schemes and ruinous experiments, every one of them at variance with the opinions of the testator; in new methods of turnip hoeing; in speculations in madder—this would be to tear his soul from his body twice over—

> 'His patron's ghost from Limbo lake the while
> Sees this which more damnation doth upon him pile!'

Mr. Cobbett complained, that in his last interview with Baron Mazeres, that gentleman was in his dotage, and that the reverend

legatee sat at the bottom of the table, cutting a poor figure, and not contradicting a word the Baron said. No doubt, as he has put this in print in the exuberance of his dissatisfaction, he let both gentlemen see pretty plainly what he thought of them, and fancied that this expression of his contempt, as it gratified him, was the way to ensure the good will of the one to make over his whole estate, or the good word of the other to let him *go snacks*. This is a new way of being *quits* with one's benefactors, and an egregious *quid pro quo*. If Baron Mazeres had left Mr. Cobbett 200,000*l.* it must have been not to write his epitaph, or visit him in his last moments!

A gossiping chambermaid who only smiles and assents when her mistress wishes her to talk, or an ignorant country clown who stands with his hat off when he has a favour to ask of the squire, (and if he is wise, at all other times,) knows more of the matter. A knowledge of mankind is little more than the Scotch instinct of *bowing*, or of 'never standing upright in the presence of a great man,' or of that great blockhead, the world. It is not a perception of truth, but a sense of power, and an instant determination of the will to submit to it. It is therefore less an intellectual acquirement than a natural disposition. It is on this account that I think both cunning and wisdom are a sort of original endowments, or attain maturity much earlier than is supposed, from their being moral qualities, and having their seat in the heart rather than the head. The difference depends on the *manner* of seeing things. The one is a selfish, the other is a disinterested view of nature. The one is the clear open look of integrity, the other is a contracted and blear-eyed obliquity of mental vison. If any one has but the courage and honesty to look at an object as it is in itself, or divested of prejudice, fear, and favour, he will be sure to see it pretty right; as he who regards it through the refractions of opinion and fashion, will be sure to see it distorted and falsified, however the error may rebound to his own advantage. Certainly, he who makes the universe tributary to his convenience, and subjects all his impressions of what is right or wrong, true or false, black or white, round or square, to the standard and maxims of the world, who never utters a proposition but he fancies a patron close at his elbow who overhears him, who is even afraid, in private, to suffer an honest conviction to rise in his mind, lest it should mount to his lips, get wind, and ruin his prospects in life, ought to gain something in exchange for the restraint and force put upon his thoughts and faculties: on the contrary, he who is confined by no such petty and debasing trammels, whose comprehension of mind is 'in large heart enclosed,' finds his inquiries and his views expand in a degree commensurate

with the universe around him; makes truth welcome wherever he meets her, and receives her cordial embrace in return. To see things divested of passion and interest, is to see them with the eye of history and philosophy. It is easy to judge right, or at least to come to a mutual understanding in matters of history and abstract morality. Why then is it so difficult to arrive at the same calm certainty in actual life? Because the passions and interests are concerned, and it requires so much more candour, love of truth, and independence of spirit to encounter 'the world and its dread laugh,' to throw aside every sinister consideration, and grapple with the plain merits of the case. To be wiser than other men is to be honester than they; and strength of mind is only courage to see and speak the truth. Perhaps the courage may be also owing to the strength; but both go together, and are natural, and not acquired. Do we not see in fables the force of the moral principle in detecting the truth? The only effect of fables is, by making inanimate or irrational things actors in the scene, to remove the case completely from our own sphere, to take our self-love off its guard, to simplify the question; and yet the result of this obvious appeal is allowed to be universal and irresistible. Is not this another example that 'the heart of man is deceitful above all things;' or, that it is less our incapacity to distinguish what is right, than our secret determination to adhere to what is wrong, that prevents our discriminating one from the other? It is not that great and useful truths are not manifest and discernible in themselves; but little, dirty objects get between them and us, and from being near and gross, hide the lofty and distant! The first business of the patriot and the philanthropist is to overleap this barrier, to rise out of this material dross. Indignation, contempt of the base and grovelling, makes the philosopher no less than the poet; and it is the power of looking beyond self that enables each to inculcate moral truth and nobleness of sentiment, the one by general precepts, the other by individual example.

I have no quarrel with men of the world, mere *muck-worms*: every one after his fashion, 'as the flesh and fortune shall serve;' but I confess I have a little distaste to those, who, having set out as loud and vaunting enthusiasts, have turned aside to 'tread the primrose path of dalliance,' and to revile those who did not choose to follow so edifying an example. The candid brow and elastic spring of youth may be exchanged for the wrinkles and crookedness of age; but at least we should retain something of the erectness and openness of our first unbiassed thoughts. I cannot understand how any degree of egotism can dispense with the consciousness of personal identity. As we advance farther in life, we are naturally inclined to revert in imagination to its commencement; but what can those

dwell upon there who find only feelings that they despise, and opinions that they have abjured? 'If thine eye offend thee, pull it out and cast it from thee:' but the operation is a painful one, and the body remains after it only a mutilated fragment. Generally, those who are cut off from this resource in former recollections, make up for it (as well as they can) by an exaggerated and uxorious fondness for their late-espoused convictions—a thing unsightly and indecent! Why does he, who, at one time, despises 'the little chapel-bell,' afterwards write 'the Book of the Church?' The one is not an atonement for the other: each shows only a juvenile or a superannuated precocity of judgment. It is uniting Camille-Desmoulins and Camille-Jourdan, (*Jourdan of the Chimes*) in one character. I should like (not out of malice, but from curiosity) to see Mr. Southey re-write the beautiful poem on 'his own miniature-picture, when he was two years old,' and see what he would substitute for the lines—

> 'And it was thought,
> That thou shouldst tread preferment's flowery path,
> Young Robert!'

There must here, I think, be *hiatus in manuscriptis*: the verse must halt a little! The laureate and his friends say that they are still labouring on the same design as ever, correcting the outlines and filling up the unfinished sketch of their early opinions. They seem rather to have blotted them quite out, and to have taken a fresh canvas to begin another and no less extravagant caricature. Or their new and old theories remind one of those heads in picture-dealers' shops, where one half of the face is thoroughly cleaned and repaired, and the other left covered with stains and dirt, to show the necessity of the picture-scourer's art: the transition offends the sight. It may be made a question whether men grow wiser as they grow older, any more than they grow stronger or healthier or honester. They may, in one sense, imbibe a greater portion of worldly wisdom, and have their romantic flights tamed to the level of every day's practice and experience; but perhaps it would be better if some of the extravagance and enthusiasm of youth could be infused into the latter, instead of being absorbed (perforce) in that sink of pride, envy, selfishness, ignorance, conceit, prejudice, and hypocrisy. One thing is certain, that this is the present course of events, and that if the individual grows wiser as he gains experience, the world does not, and that the tardy penitent who is treading back his steps, may meet the world advancing as he is retreating, and adopting more and more of the genuine impulses and disinterested

views of youth into its creed. It is, indeed, only by conforming to some such original and unsophisticated standard, that it can acquire either soundness or consistency. The appeal is a fair one, from the bad habits of society to the unprejudiced aspirations and impressions of human nature.

## THE SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED

*The London Weekly Review.*] [*December* 15, 1827.

It seems, in truth, a hard case to have all the world against us, and to require uncommon fortitude (not to say presumption) to stand out single against such a host. The bare suggestion must 'give us pause,' and has no doubt overturned many an honest conviction. The *opinion of the world*, (as it pompously entitles itself,) if it means anything more than a set of local and party prejudices, with which only our interest, not truth, is concerned, is a shadow, a bugbear, and a contradiction in terms. *Having all the world against us*, is a phrase without a meaning; for in those points in which all the world agree, no one differs from the world. If all the world were of the same way of thinking, and always kept in the same mind, it would certainly be a little staggering to have them against you. But however widely and angrily they may differ from you, they differ as much so from one another, and even from themselves. What is gospel at one moment, is heresy the next:—different countries and climates have different notions of things. When you are put on your trial, therefore, for impugning the public opinion, you may always *subpœna* this great body against itself. For example, I have been twitted for somewhere calling Tom Paine a great writer, and no doubt his reputation at present 'does somewhat smack:' yet in 1792 he was so great, or so popular an author, and so much read and admired by numbers who would not now mention his name, that the Government was obliged to suspend the Constitution, and to go to war to counteract the effects of his popularity. His extreme popularity was then the cause (by a common and vulgar *reaction*) of his extreme obnoxiousness. If the opinion of the world, then, contradicts itself, why may not I contradict it, or choose at what time, and to what extent I will agree with it? I have been accused of abusing dissenters, and saying that sectaries, in general, are dry and suspicious; and I believe that all the world will say the same thing except themselves. I have said that the church people are proud and overbearing, which has given them umbrage, though in this I have all the sectaries on my side. I have laughed at the Methodists,

and for this I have been accused of glancing at religion: yet who does not laugh at the Methodists as well as myself? But I also laugh at those who laugh at them. I have pointed out by turns the weak sides and foibles of different sects and parties, and they themselves maintain that they are perfect and infallible: and this is what is called having all the world against me. I have inveighed all my life against the insolence of the Tories, and for this I have the authority both of Whigs and Reformers; but then I have occasionally spoken against the imbecility of the Whigs, and the extravagance of the Reformers, and thus have brought all three on my back, though two out of the three regularly agree with all I say of the third party. Poets do not approve of what I have said of their turning prose-writers; nor do the politicians approve of my tolerating the fooleries of the fanciful tribe at all: so they make common cause to *damn* me between them. People never excuse the drawbacks from themselves, nor the concessions to an adversary: such is the justice and candour of mankind! Mr. Wordsworth is not satisfied with the praise I have heaped upon himself, and still less, that I have allowed Mr. Moore to be a poet at all. I do not think I have ever set my face against the popular idols of the day; I have been among the foremost in crying up Mrs. Siddons, Kean, Sir Walter Scott, Madame Pasta, and others; and as to the great names of former times, my admiration has been lavish, and sometimes almost mawkish. I have dissented, it is true, in one or two instances; but that only shows that I judge for myself, not that I make a point of contradicting the general taste. I have been more to blame in trying to push certain Illustrious Obscure into notice:—they have not forgiven the obligation, nor the world the tacit reproach. As to my personalities, they might quite as well be termed *impersonalities*. I am so intent on the abstract proposition and its elucidation, that I regard everything else as of very subordinate consequence: my friends, I conceive, will not refuse to contribute to so laudable an undertaking, and my enemies *must*! I have found fault with the French, I have found fault with the English; and pray, do they not find great, mutual, and just fault with one another? It may seem a great piece of arrogance in any one, to set up his individual and private judgment against that of ten millions of people; but cross the channel, and you will have thirty millions on your side. Even should the thirty millions come over to the opinions of the ten, (a thing that may happen tomorrow,) still one need not despair. I remember my old friend Peter Finnerty, laughing very heartily at something I had written about the Scotch, but it was followed up by a sketch of the Irish, on which he closed

the book, looked grave, and said he disapproved entirely of all national reflections. Thus you have all the world on your side, except when it is the party concerned. What any set of people think or say of themselves is hardly a rule for others: yet, if you do not attach yourself to some one set of people and principles, and stick to them through thick and thin, instead of giving your opinion fairly and fully all round, you must expect to have all the world against you, for no other reason than because you express sincerely, and *for their good*, not only what they say of others, but what is said of themselves, which they would fain keep a profound secret, and prevent the divulging of it under the severest pains and penalties. When I told J—— that I had composed a work in which I had 'in some sort handled' about a score of leading characters, he said, 'Then you will have one man against you, and the remaining nineteen for you!' I have not found it so. In fact, these persons would agree pretty nearly to all that I say, and allow that, in nineteen points out of twenty, I am right; but the twentieth, that relates to some imperfection of their own, weighs down all the rest, and produces an unanimous verdict against the author. There is but one thing in which the world agree, a certain bigoted blindness, and conventional hypocrisy, without which, according to Mandeville, (that is, if they really spoke what they thought and knew of one another,) they would fall to cutting each other's throats immediately.

We find the same contrariety and fluctuation of opinion in different ages, as well as countries and classes. For about a thousand years, during 'the high and palmy state' of the Romish hierarchy, it was agreed (*nemine contradicente*) that *two and two made five*: afterwards, for above a century, there was great battling and controversy to prove that they made four and a half; then, for a century more, it was thought a great stride taken to come down to four and a quarter; and, perhaps, in another century or two, it will be discovered for a wonder that *two and two actually make four*! It is said, that this slow advance and perpetual interposition of impediments is a salutary check to the rashness of innovation, and to hazardous experiments. At least, it is a very effectual one, amounting almost to a prohibition. One age is employed in building up an absurdity, and the next exhausts all its wit and learning, zeal and fury, in battering it down, so that at the end of two generations you come to the point where you set out, and have to begin again. These heats and disputes about external points of faith may be things of no consequence, since under all the variations of form or doctrine the essentials of practice remain the same. It does not seem so; at any rate, the non-essentials appear to excite all

the interest, and 'keep this dreadful pudder o'er our heads;' and when the dogma is once stripped of mystery and intolerance, and reduced to common sense, no one appears to take any further notice of it.

The appeal, then, to the authority of the world, chiefly resolves itself into the old proverb, that 'when you are at Rome you must do as those at Rome do;' that is, it is a shifting circle of local prejudices and gratuitous assumptions, a successful conformity to which is best insured by a negation of all other qualities that might interfere with it: solid reason and virtue are out of the question. But it may be insisted, that there are qualities of a more practical order that may greatly contribute to and facilitate our advancement in life, such as presence of mind, convivial talents, insight into character, thorough acquaintance with the profounder principles and secret springs of society, and so forth. I do not deny that all this may be of advantage in extraordinary cases, and often abridge difficulties; but I do not think that it is either necessary or generally useful. For instance, habitual caution and reserve is a surer resource than that presence of mind, or quick-witted readiness of expedient, which, though it gets men out of scrapes, as often leads them into them by begetting a false confidence. Persons of agreeable and lively talents often find to their cost that one indiscretion procures them more enemies then ten agreeable sallies do friends. A too great penetration into character is less desirable than a certain power of hoodwinking ourselves to their defects, unless the former is accompanied with a profound hypocrisy, which is also liable to detection and discomfiture: and as to general maxims and principles of worldly knowledge, I conceive that an instinctive sympathy with them is much more profitable than their incautious discovery and formal announcement. Thus, the politic rule, 'When a great wheel goes up a hill, cling fast to it; when a great wheel runs down a hill, let go your hold of it,' may be useful as a hint or warning to the shyness or fidelity of an Englishman; a North Briton feels its truth instinctively, and acts upon it unconsciously. When it is observed in the *History of a Foundling*, that 'Mr. Alworthy had done so many charitable actions that he had made enemies of the whole parish,' the sarcasm is the dictate of a generous indignation at ingratitude rather than a covert apology for selfish niggardliness. Misanthropic reflections have their source in philanthropic sentiments; the real despiser of the world keeps up appearances with it, and is at pains to varnish over its vices and follies, even to himself, lest his secret should be betrayed, and do him an injury. Those who see completely into the world begin to play tricks with it, and overreach themselves by being too knowing: it is even possible to *out-cant* it, and get laughed at that

way. Fielding knew something of the world, yet he did not make a fortune. Sir Walter Scott has twice made a fortune by descriptions of nature and character, and has twice lost it by the same fondness for speculative gains. Wherever there is a strong faculty for anything, the exercise of that faculty becomes its own end and reward, and produces an indifference or inattention to other things; so that the best security for success in the world is an incapacity for success in any other way. A bookseller to succeed in his business should have no knowledge of books, except as marketable commodities: the instant he has a taste, an opinion of his own on the subject, he may consider himself as a ruined man. In like manner, a picture-dealer should know nothing of pictures but the catalogue price, the cant of the day. The moment he has a feeling for the art, he will be tenacious of it: a Guido, a Salvator 'will be the fatal Cleopatra for which he will lose all he is worth, and be content to lose it.' Should a general then know nothing of war, a physician of medicine? No: because this is an art and not a trick, and the one has to contend with nature, and the other with an enemy, and not to pamper or cajole the follies of the world. It requires also great talents to overturn the world; not, to push one's fortune in it: to rule the state like Cromwell or Buonaparte; not, to rise in it like Castlereagh or Croker. Yet, even in times of crisis and convulsion, he who outrages the feeling of the moment and echoes the wildest extravagance, succeeds; as, in times of peace and tranquillity, he does so who acquiesces most tamely in the ordinary routine of things. This may serve to point out another error, common to men of the world, who sometimes, giving themselves credit for more virtue than they possess, declare very candidly that if they had to begin life over again, they would have been *great rogues*. The answer to this is, that then they would have been *hanged*! No: the way to get on in the world is to be neither more nor less wise, neither better nor worse than your neighbours, neither to be a 'reformer nor a house-breaker,' neither to advance before the age nor lag behind it, but to be as like it as possible, to reflect its image and superscription at every turn, and then you will be its darling and its delight, and it will dandle you and fondle you, and make much of you, as a monkey doats upon its young! The knowledge of vice—that is, of *statutable* vice—is not the knowledge of the world: otherwise a Bow-street runner and the keeper of a house of ill fame, would be the most knowing characters, and would soon rise above their professions.

# ON PUBLIC OPINION

*The London Weekly Review.*] [*January* 19, 1828.

'Scared at the sound itself has made.'

Once asking a friend why he did not bring forward an explanation of a circumstance, in which his conduct had been called in question, he said, 'His friends were satisfied on the subject, and he cared very little about the opinion of the world.' I made answer that I did not consider this a good ground to rest his defence upon, for that a man's friends seldom thought better of him than the world did. I see no reason to alter this opinion. Our friends, indeed, are more apt than a mere stranger to join in with, or be silent under any imputation thrown out against us, because they are apprehensive they may be indirectly implicated in it, and they are bound to betray us to save their own credit. To judge of our jealousy, our sensibility, our high notions of responsibility on this score, only consider if a single individual lets fall a solitary remark implying a doubt of the wit, the sense, the courage of a friend,—how it staggers us—how it makes us shake with fear—how it makes us call up all our eloquence and airs of self-consequence in his defence, lest our partiality should be supposed to have blinded our perceptions, and we should be regarded as the dupes of a mistaken admiration. We already begin to meditate an escape from a losing cause, and try to find out some other fault in the character under discussion, to show that we are not behind-hand (if the truth must be spoken) in sagacity, and a sense of the ridiculous. If, then, this is the case with the first flaw, the first doubt, the first speck that dims the sun of friendship, so that we are ready to turn our backs on our sworn attachment and well-known professions the instant we have not all the world with us, what must it be when we have all the world against us; when our friend, instead of a single stain, is covered with mud from head to foot; how shall we expect our feeble voices not to be drowned in the general clamour? how shall we dare to oppose our partial and mis-timed suffrages to the just indignation of the public? Or if it should not amount to this, how shall we answer the silence and contempt with which his name is received? how shall we animate the great mass of indifference or distrust with our private enthusiasm? how defeat the involuntary smile, or the suppressed sneer, with the burst of generous feeling and the glow of honest conviction? It is a thing not to be thought of, unless we would enter into a crusade against prejudice and malignity, devote ourselves as martyrs to friendship, raise a controversy in every company we go into, quarrel with every person we meet, and

after making ourselves and everyone else uncomfortable, leave off, not by clearing our friend's reputation, but by involving our own pretensions to decency and common sense. People will not fail to observe, that a man may have his reasons for his faults or vices; but that for another to volunteer a defence of them, is without excuse. It is, in fact, an attempt to deprive them of the great and only benefit they derive from the supposed errors of their neighbours and contemporaries—the pleasure of backbiting and railing at them, which they call *seeing justice done*. It is not a single breath of rumour or opinion; but the whole atmosphere is infected with a sort of agueish taint of anger and suspicion, that relaxes the nerves of fidelity, and makes our most sanguine resolutions sicken and turn pale; and he who is proof against it, must either be armed with a love of truth, or a contempt for mankind, which place him out of the reach of ordinary rules and calculations. For myself, I do not shrink from defending a cause or a friend *under a cloud*; though in neither case will cheap or common efforts suffice. But, in the first, you merely stand up for your own judgment and principles against fashion and prejudice, and thus assume a sort of manly and heroic attitude of defiance: in the last, (which makes it a matter of greater nicety and nervous sensibility,) you sneak behind another to throw your gauntlet at the whole world, and it requires a double stock of stoical firmness not to be laughed out of your boasted zeal and independence as a romantic and *amiable weakness*.[1]

There is nothing in which all the world agree but in running down some obnoxious individual. It may be supposed, that this is not for nothing, and that they have good reasons for what they do. On the contrary, I will undertake to say, that so far from there being invariably just grounds for such an universal outcry, the universality of the outcry is often the only ground of the opinion; and that it is purposely raised upon this principle, that all other proof or evidence against the person meant to be run down is wanting. Nay, farther, it may happen, while the clamour is at the loudest; while you hear it from all quarters; while it blows a perfect hurricane; while 'the world rings with the vain stir'—not one of those who are most eager in hearing and echoing it knows what it is about, or is not fully persuaded, that the charge is equally false, malicious, and absurd. It is like the wind, that 'no man knoweth whence it cometh, or whither

[1] The only friends whom we defend with zeal and obstinacy are our relations. They seem part of ourselves. We cannot shake them off till they are hanged, nor then neither! For our other friends we are only answerable, as long as we countenance them; and we therefore cut the connection as soon as possible. But who ever willingly gave up the good dispositions of a child, or the honour of a parent?

it goeth.' It is *vox et praeterea nihil*. What then is it that gives it its confident circulation and its irresistible force? It is the loudness of the organ with which it is pronounced, the Stentorian lungs of the multitude; the number of voices that take it up and repeat it, because others have done so; the rapid flight and the impalpable nature of common fame, that makes it a desperate undertaking for any individual to inquire into or arrest the mischief that, in the deafening buzz or loosened roar of laughter or of indignation, renders it impossible for the still small voice of reason to be heard, and leaves no other course to honesty or prudence than to fall flat on the face before it as before the pestilential blast of the Desert, and wait till it has passed over. Thus everyone joins in asserting, propagating, and in outwardly approving what everyone, in his private and unbiassed judgment, believes and knows to be scandalous and untrue. For everyone in such circumstances keeps his own opinion to himself, and only attends to or acts upon that which he conceives to be the opinion of everyone but himself. So that public opinion is not seldom a farce, equal to any acted upon the stage. Not only is it spurious and hollow in the way that Mr. Locke points out, by one man's taking up at second hand the opinion of another, but worse than this, one man takes up what he believes another *will* think and which the latter professes only because he believes it held by the first! All therefore that is necessary, to control public opinion, is, to gain possession of some organ loud and lofty enough to make yourself heard, that has power and interest on its side; and then, no sooner do you blow a blast in this trump of *ill-fame*, like the horn hung up by an old castle-wall, than you are answered, echoed, and accredited on all sides: the gates are thrown open to receive you, and you are admitted into the very heart of the fortress of public opinion, and can assail from the ramparts with every engine of abuse, and with privileged impunity, all those who may come forward to vindicate the truth, or to rescue their good name from the unprincipled keeping of authority, servility, sophistry and venal falsehood! The only thing wanted is to give an alarm—to excite a panic in the public mind of being left *in the lurch*, and the rabble (whether in the ranks of literature or war) will throw away their arms, and surrender at discretion to any bully or impostor who, for a *consideration*, shall choose to try the experiment upon them!

What I have here described is the effect even upon the candid and well-disposed:—what must it be to the malicious and idle, who are eager to believe all the ill they can hear of everyone; or to the prejudiced and interested, who are determined to credit all the ill they hear against those who are not of their own side? To these last it is only requisite to be understood that the butt of ridicule or

slander is of an opposite party, and they presently give you *carte blanche* to say what you please of him. Do they know that it is true? No; but they believe what all the world says, till they have evidence to the contrary. Do you prove that it is false? They dare say, that if not, that something worse remains behind; and they retain the same opinion as before, for the honour of their party. They hire someone to pelt you with mud, and then affect to avoid you in the street as a dirty fellow. They are told that you have a hump on your back, and then wonder at your assurance or want of complaisance in walking into a room where they are, without it. Instead of apologising for the mistake, and, from finding one aspersion false, doubting all the rest, they are only more confirmed in the remainder from being deprived of one handle against you, and resent their disappointment, instead of being ashamed of their credulity. People talk of the bigotry of the Catholics, and treat with contempt the absurd claim of the Popes to infallibility—I think, with little right to do so. I walk into a church in Paris, where I am struck with a number of idle forms and ceremonies, the chaunting of the service in Latin, the shifting of the surplices, the sprinkling of holy-water, the painted windows 'casting a dim religious light,' the wax-tapers, the pealing organ: the common people seem attentive and devout, and to put entire faith in all this—Why? Because they imagine others to do so, they see and hear certain signs and supposed evidences of it, and it amuses and fills up the void of the mind, the love of the mysterious and wonderful, to lend their assent to it. They have assuredly, in general, no better reason—all our Protestant divines will tell you so. Well, I step out of the church of St. Roche, and drop into an English reading-room hard by: what am I the better? I see a dozen or a score of my countrymen, with their faces fixed, and their eyes glued to a newspaper, a magazine, a review—reading, swallowing, profoundly ruminating on the lie, the cant, the sophism of the day! Why? It saves them the trouble of thinking; it gratifies their ill-humour, and keeps off *ennui*! Does any gleam of doubt, an air of ridicule or a glance of impatience pass across their features at the shallow and monstrous things they find? No, it is all passive faith and dull security; they cannot take their eyes from the page, they cannot live without it. They believe in Mr. Blackwood, (you see it in their faces) as implicitly as in Sir John Barleycorn; in the John Bull as in a sirloin of beef; in the Quarterly as assuredly as in quarter-day—as they hope to receive their rents, or to see old England again! Are not the Popes, the Fathers, the Councils, as good as these oracles, scouts, and champions of theirs? They know that the John Bull, for instance, is a hoax, a humbug, an impudent

imposture, got up, week by week, to puff whom it pleases, to bully whom it pleases, to traduce whom it pleases, without any principle but a hint from its patrons, or without a pretence to any other principle. Do they believe in the known lie, the gross ribaldry, the foul calumny, the less on that account? They believe the more in it: because it is got up solely and expressly to serve a cause that needs such support—and they swear by whatever is devoted to this object.

The greater the profligacy, the effrontery, the servility, the greater the faith. Strange! that the British public (whether at home or abroad) should shake their heads at the Lady of Loretto, and repose deliciously on Mr. Theodore Hook! It may be thought that the enlightened part of the British public (persons of family and fortune, and often title, who have had a college-education and received the benefit of foreign travel) see through the quackery, which they encourage only for a political purpose, without being themselves the dupes of it. Suppose an individual of whom it has been repeatedly asserted that he has warts on his nose, were to enter the reading-room aforesaid in the Rue de la Paix—is there a single red-faced country squire who would not be surprised at not finding this part of the story true—would not persuade himself five minutes after that he could not have been seen correctly, or that some art had been used to conceal the defect, or would be led to doubt, from this instance, Mr. Blackwood's general candour and veracity? On the contrary, the gentleman would be obliged to disbelieve his senses rather than give Mr. Blackwood the lie, who is read and believed by the whole world. He would have a host of witnesses against him: there is not a reader of Blackwood who would not swear to the fact. Seeing is believing, it is said. Lying is believing, say I. We do not even see with our own eyes, but must 'wink and shut our apprehensions up,' that we may be able to agree to the report of others, as a piece of good manners and point of established etiquette.—Besides, the supposed deformity answered his wishes: the abuse 'fed fat the ancient grudge he owed' some presumptuous scribbler, for not agreeing in a number of points with his betters: it gave him a personal advantage over one he did not like—and who will give up what tends to strengthen his aversion against another? To Tory prejudice, sore as it is—to English imagination, morbid as it is, a nickname, a ludicrous epithet, a malignant falsehood (when it has once been propagated and taken to bosoms as a welcome consolation) becomes a precious property, a vested right; and people would as soon give up a sinecure, or a share in a close borough, as a plenary indulgence (published monthly with the court privilege) to speak and think with contempt of those who would abolish the one or throw open the other.

# ON THE CAUSES OF POPULAR OPINION

*The London Weekly Review.*] [*February* 16, 1828.

Party-Spirit is the best reason in the world for personal antipathy and vulgar abuse.

'But, do you not think, Sir,' (methinks I hear some Scotch dialectician exclaim,) 'that belief is involuntary, and that we judge in all cases according to the precise degree of evidence and the positive facts before us?'

No, Sir.

'You believe, then, in the doctrine of philosophical free-will?'

Indeed, Sir, I do not.

'How then, Sir, am I to understand so unaccountable a diversity of opinion from the most approved writers on the philosophy of the human mind, such as Mr. Dugald Stewart and the Editors of the Edinburgh Encyclopædia?'

May I ask, my dear Sir, did you ever read Mr. Wordsworth's poem of Michael?

'I cannot charge my memory with the fact; or I paid no particular attention to it at the time, as I have always agreed with the Edinburgh Review in considering Mr. Wordsworth's poetry as remarkably silly and puerile.'

But still true to Nature in a humble way.

'Why, I think, Sir, something of that kind is admitted (either by way of ridicule or praise) in the article in the Review.'

Well, Sir, this Michael is an old shepherd, who has a son who goes to sea, and who turns out a great reprobate by all the accounts received of him. Before he went, however, the father took the boy with him into a mountain-glen, and made him lay the first stone of a sheep-fold, which was to be a covenant and a remembrance between them if anything ill happened. For years after, the old man used to go to work at this sheep-fold—

> 'Among the rocks
> He went, and still look'd up upon the sun,
> And listen'd to the wind'—

and sat by the half-finished work, expecting the lad's return, or hoping to hear some better tidings of him. Was this hope founded on reason—or was it not owing to the strength of affection which, in spite of everything, could not relinquish its hold of a favourite object, indeed the only one that bound it to existence?

Not being able to make my Scotchman answer kindly to interroga-

tories, I must get on without him. Indeed, I have generally found the natives of that country greater hindrances than helps. In matters of absolute demonstration and speculative indifferences, I grant, that belief is involuntary, and the proof not to be resisted; but then, in such matters, there is no difference of opinion, or the difference is adjusted amicably and rationally. Hobbes is of opinion, that if their passions or interests could be implicated in the question, men would deny stoutly that the three angles of a right-angled triangle are equal to two right ones: and the disputes in religion look something like it. I only contend, however, that in all cases not of this peremptory and determinate cast, and where disputes commonly arise, inclination, habit, and example have a powerful share in throwing in the casting-weight to our opinions; and that he who is only tolerably free from these, and not their regular dupe or slave, is indeed 'a man of ten thousand.' Take, for instance, the example of a Catholic clergyman in a popish country: it will generally be found that he lives and dies in the faith in which he was brought up, as the Protestant clergyman does in his.—Shall we say that the necessity of gaining a livelihood, or the prospect of preferment, that the early bias given to his mind by education and study, the pride of victory, the shame of defeat, the example and encouragement of all about him, the respect and love of his flock, the flattering notice of the great, have no effect in giving consistency to his opinions and carrying them through to the last? Yet, who will suppose that in either case this apparent uniformity is mere hypocrisy, or that the intellects of the two classes of divines are naturally adapted to the arguments in favour of the two religions they have occasion to profess? No: but the understanding takes a tincture from outward impulses and circumstances, and is led to dwell on those suggestions which favour, and to blind itself to the objections which impugn, the side to which it previously and morally inclines. Again, even in those who oppose established opinions, and form the little, firm, formidable phalanx of dissent, have not early instruction, spiritual pride, the love of contradiction, a resistance to usurped authority, as much to do with the keeping up the war of sects and schisms as the abstract love of truth or conviction of the understanding? Does not persecution fan the flame in such fiery tempers, and does it not expire, or grow lukewarm, with indulgence and neglect? I have a sneaking kindness for a Popish priest in this country; and to a Catholic peer I would willingly bow in passing. What are national antipathies, individual attachments, but so many expressions of the *moral* principle in forming our opinions? All our opinions become grounds on which we act, and build our expectations of good or ill; and this good or ill mixed up with them is soon changed into

the ruling principle which modifies or violently supersedes the original cool determination of the reason and senses. The will, when it once gets a footing, turns the sober judgment out of doors. If we form an attachment to anyone, are we not slow in giving it up? or, if our suspicions are once excited, are we not equally rash and violent in believing the worst? Othello characterizes himself as one

> 'Who loved not wisely, but too well;
> As one not easily wrought—but, being jealous,
> Perplex'd in the extreme.'

And this answers to the movements and irregularities of passion and opinion which take place in human nature. If we wish a thing, we are disposed to believe it; if we have been accustomed to believe it, we are the more obstinate in defending it on that account: if all the world differ from us in any questions of moment, we are ashamed to own it; or are hurried by peevishness and irritation into extravagance and paradox. The weight of example presses upon us (whether we feel it or not) like the law of gravitation. He who sustains his opinion by the strength of conviction and evidence alone, unmoved by ridicule, neglect, obloquy, or privation, shows no less resolution than the Hindoo who makes and keeps a vow to hold his right arm in the air till it grows rigid and callous.

To have all the world against us is trying to a man's temper and philosophy. It unhinges even our opinion of our own motives and intentions. It is like striking the actual world from under our feet: the void that is left, the death-like pause, the chilling suspense, is fearful. The growth of an opinion is like the growth of a limb: it receives its actual support and nourishment from the general body of the opinions, feelings, and practice of the world: without that, it soon withers, festers, and becomes useless. To what purpose write a good book, if it is sure to be pronounced a bad one, even before it is read? If our thoughts are to be blown stifling back upon ourselves, why utter them at all? It is only exposing what we love most to contumely and insult, and thus depriving ourselves of our own relish and satisfaction in them. Language is only made to communicate our sentiments, and if we can find no one to receive them, we are reduced to the silence of dumbness, we live but in the solitude of a dungeon. If we do not vindicate our opinions, we seem poor creatures who have no right to them; if we speak out, we are involved in continual brawls and controversy. If we contemn what others admire, we make ourselves odious: if we admire what they despise, we are equally ridiculous. We have not the applause of the world nor the support of a party: we can neither enjoy the freedom of

social intercourse, nor the calm of privacy. With our respect for others, we lose confidence in ourselves: everything seems to be a subject of litigation—to want proof or confirmation; we doubt, by degrees, whether we stand on our head or our heels—whether we know our right hand from our left. If I am assured that I never wrote a sentence of common English in my life, how can I know that that is not the case? If I am told at one time that my writings are as heavy as lead, and at another, that they are more light than the gossamer—what resource have I but to choose between the two? I could say, if this were the place, what those writings are.—'Make it the place, and never stand upon punctilio!'

They are not, then, so properly the works of an author by profession, as the thoughts of a metaphysician expressed by a painter. They are subtle and difficult problems translated into hieroglyphics. I thought for several years on the hardest subjects, on Fate, Free Will, Foreknowledge absolute, without ever making use of words or images at all, and that has made them come in such throngs and confused heaps when I burst from that void of abstraction. In proportion to the tenuity to which my ideas had been drawn, and my abstinence from ornament and sensible objects, was the tenaciousness with which actual circumstances and picturesque imagery laid hold of my mind, when I turned my attention to them, or had to look round for illustrations. Till I began to paint, or till I became acquainted with the author of *The Ancient Mariner*, I could neither write nor speak. He encouraged me to write a book, which I did according to the original bent of my mind, making it as dry and meagre as I could, so that it fell still-born from the press, and none of those who abuse me for a shallow *catch-penny* writer have so much as heard of it. Yet, let me say that that work contains an important metaphysical discovery, supported by a continuous and severe train of reasoning, nearly as subtle and original as anything in Hume or Berkeley. I am not accustomed to speak of myself in this manner, but impudence may provoke modesty to justify itself. Finding this method did not answer, I despaired for a time: but some trifle I wrote in the Morning Chronicle meeting the approbation of the Editor and the town, I resolved to turn over a new leaf—to take the public at its word, to muster all the tropes and figures I could lay hands on, and, though I am a plain man, never to appear abroad but in an embroidered dress. Still, old habits will prevail; and I hardly ever set about a paragraph or a criticism, but there was an undercurrent of thought, or some generic distinction on which the whole turned. Having got my clue, I had no difficulty in stringing pearls upon it; and the more recondite the point, the more I laboured to

bring it out and set it off by a variety of ornaments and allusions. This puzzled the court-scribes, whose business it was to crush me. They could not see the meaning: they would not see the colouring, for it hurt their eyes. Oh, had I been but one of them, I might even have dined with Mr. Murray! One cried out, it was dull; another, that it was too fine by half: my friends took up this last alternative as the most favourable; and since then it has been agreed that I am a florid writer, somewhat flighty and paradoxical. Yet, when I wished to unburthen my mind in the Edinburgh by an article on English (not Scotch) metaphysics, J—— who echoes this *florid* charge, said he preferred what I wrote for effect, and was afraid of its being thought heavy—by the side of Macculloch! I have accounted for the flowers;—the paradoxes may be accounted for in the same way. All abstract reasoning is in extremes, or only takes up one view of a question, or what is called the principle of the thing; and if you want to give this popularity and effect, you are in danger of running into extravagance and hyperbole. I have had to bring out some obscure distinction, or to combat some strong prejudice, and in doing this with all my might, may have often overshot the mark. It was easy to correct the excess of truth afterwards. I have been accused of inconsistency, for writing an essay, for instance, on the Advantages of Pedantry, and another, on the *Ignorance of the Learned*, as if ignorance had not its comforts as well as knowledge. The personalities I have fallen into have never been gratuitous. If I have sacrificed my friends, it has always been to a theory. I have been found fault with for repeating myself, and for a narrow range of ideas. To a want of general reading, I plead guilty, and am sorry for it; but perhaps if I had read more, I might have thought less. As to my barrenness of invention, I have at least glanced over a number of subjects—painting, poetry, prose, plays, politics, parliamentary speakers, metaphysical lore, books, men, and things. There is some point, some fancy, some feeling, some taste shown in treating of these. Which of my conclusions has been reversed? Is it what I said ten years ago of the Bourbons which raised the war-whoop against me? Surely all the world are of that opinion now. I have, then, given proofs of some talent, and of more honesty: if there is haste or want of method, there is no common-place, nor a line that licks the dust; and if I do not appear to more advantage, I at least appear such as I am. If the Editor of the Atlas will do me the favour to look over my *Essay on the Principles of Human Action*, will dip into any essay I ever wrote (except one that appeared in the Retrospective Review, which was not my own, though I was very handsomely paid the full price of an original composition for it), and will take a sponge and

clear the dust from the face of my *Old Woman* (which he can see at a common friend's), I hope he will, upon second thoughts, acquit me of an absolute dearth of resources and want of versatility in the direction of my studies.

## A FAREWELL TO ESSAY-WRITING

*The London Weekly Review.*] [*March* 29, 1828.

'This life is best, if quiet life is best.'

Food, warmth, sleep, and a book; these are all I at present ask—the *ultima thule* of my wandering desires. Do you not then wish for

'A friend in your retreat,
Whom you may whisper, solitude is sweet?'

Expected, well enough:—gone, still better. Such attractions are strengthened by distance. Nor a mistress? 'Beautiful mask! I know thee!' When I can judge of the heart from the face, of the thoughts from the lips, I may again trust myself. Instead of these, give me the robin red-breast, pecking the crumbs at the door, or warbling on the leafless spray, the same glancing form that has followed me wherever I have been, and 'done its spiriting gently;' or the rich notes of the thrush that startle the ear of winter, and seem to have drunk up the full draught of joy from the very sense of contrast. To these I adhere and am faithful, for they are true to me; and, dear in themselves, are dearer for the sake of what is departed, leading me back (by the hand) to that dreaming world, in the innocence of which they sat and made sweet music, waking the promise of future years, and answered by the eager throbbings of my own breast. But now 'the credulous hope of mutual minds is o'er,' and I turn back from the world that has deceived me, to nature that lent it a false beauty, and that keeps up the illusion of the past. As I quaff my libations of tea in a morning, I love to watch the clouds sailing from the west, and fancy that 'the spring comes slowly up this way.' In this hope, while 'fields are dank and ways are mire,' I follow the same direction to a neighbouring wood, where, having gained the dry, level greensward, I can see my way for a mile before me, closed in on each side by copse-wood, and ending in a point of light more or less brilliant, as the day is bright or cloudy. What a walk is this to me! I have no need of book or companion—the days, the hours, the thoughts of my youth are at my side, and

blend with the air that fans my cheek. Here I can saunter for hours, bending my eye forward, stopping and turning to look back, thinking to strike off into some less trodden path, yet hesitating to quit the one I am in, afraid to snap the brittle threads of memory. I remark the shining trunks and slender branches of the birch trees, waving in the idle breeze; or a pheasant springs up on whirring wing; or I recall the spot where I once found a wood-pigeon at the foot of a tree, weltering in its gore, and think how many seasons have flown since 'it left its little life in air.' Dates, names, faces come back—to what purpose? Or why think of them now? Or rather, why not think of them oftener? We walk through life, as through a narrow path, with a thin curtain drawn around it; behind are ranged rich portraits, airy harps are strung—yet we will not stretch forth our hands and lift aside the veil, to catch glimpses of the one, or sweep the chords of the other. As in a theatre, when the old-fashioned green curtain drew up, groups of figures, fantastic dresses, laughing faces, rich banquets, stately columns, gleaming vistas appeared beyond; so we have only at any time to 'peep through the blanket of the past,' to possess ourselves at once of all that has regaled our senses, that is stored up in our memory, that has struck our fancy, that has pierced our hearts:—yet to all this we are indifferent, insensible, and seem intent only on the present vexation, the future disappointment. If there is a Titian hanging up in the room with me, I scarcely regard it: how then should I be expected to strain the mental eye so far, or to throw down, by the magic spells of the will, the stone-walls that enclose it in the Louvre? There is one head there of which I have often thought, when looking at it, that nothing should ever disturb me again, and I would become the character it represents—such perfect calmness and self-possession reigns in it! Why do I not hang an image of this in some dusky corner of my brain, and turn an eye upon it ever and anon, as I have need of some such talisman to calm my troubled thoughts? The attempt is fruitless, if not natural; or, like that of the French, to hang garlands on the grave, and to conjure back the dead by miniature pictures of them while living! It is only some actual coincidence, or local association that tends, without violence, to 'open all the cells where memory slept.' I can easily, by stooping over the long-sprent grass and clay-cold clod, recall the tufts of primroses, or purple hyacinths, that formerly grew on the same spot, and cover the bushes with leaves and singing-birds, as they were eighteen summers ago; or prolonging my walk and hearing the sighing gale rustle through a tall, strait wood at the end of it, can fancy that I distinguish the cry of hounds, and the fatal group issuing from it, as in

the tale of Theodore and Honoria. A moaning gust of wind aids the belief; I look once more to see whether the trees before me answer to the idea of the horror-stricken grove, and an air-built city towers over their grey tops.

> 'Of all the cities in Romanian lands,
> The chief and most renown'd Ravenna stands.'

I return home resolved to read the entire poem through, and, after dinner, drawing my chair to the fire, and holding a small print close to my eyes, launch into the full tide of Dryden's couplets (a stream of sound), comparing his didactic and descriptive pomp with the simple pathos and picturesque truth of Boccacio's story, and tasting with a pleasure, which none but an habitual reader can feel, some quaint examples of pronunciation in this accomplished versifier.

> 'Which when Honoria view'd,
> The fresh *impulse* her former fright renew'd.'—
> *Theodore and Honoria.*

> 'And made th' *insult*, which in his grief appears,
> The means to mourn thee with my pious tears.'
> *Sigismonda and Guiscardo.*

These trifling instances of the wavering and unsettled state of the language give double effect to the firm and stately march of the verse, and make me dwell with a sort of tender interest on the difficulties and doubts of an earlier period of literature. They pronounced words then in a manner which we should laugh at now; and they wrote verse in a manner which we can do anything but laugh at. The pride of a new acquisition seems to give fresh confidence to it; to impel the rolling syllables through the moulds provided for them, and to overflow the envious bounds of rhyme into time-honoured triplets. I am much pleased with Leigh Hunt's mention of Moore's involuntary admiration of Dryden's free, unshackled verse, and of his repeating *con amore*, and with an Irish spirit and accent, the fine lines—

> 'Let honour and preferment go for gold,
> But glorious beauty isn't to be sold.'

What sometimes surprises me in looking back to the past, is, with the exception already stated, to find myself so little changed in the time. The same images and trains of thought stick by me: I have the same tastes, likings, sentiments, and wishes that I had then. One great ground of confidence and support has, indeed, been struck from under my feet; but I have made it up to myself by proportionable

pertinacity of opinion. The success of the great cause, to which I had vowed myself, was to me more than all the world : I had a strength in its strength, a resource which I knew not of, till it failed me for the second time.

'Fall'n was Glenartny's stately tree !
Oh ! ne'er to see Lord Ronald more !'

It was not till I saw the axe laid to the root, that I found the full extent of what I had to lose and suffer. But my conviction of the right was only established by the triumph of the wrong ; and my earliest hopes will be my last regrets. One source of this unbendingness, (which some may call obstinacy,) is that, though living much alone, I have never worshipped the Echo. I see plainly enough that black is not white, that the grass is green, that kings are not their subjects ; and, in such self-evident cases, do not think it necessary to collate my opinions with the received prejudices. In subtler questions, and matters that admit of doubt, as I do not impose my opinion on others without a reason, so I will not give up mine to them without a better reason ; and a person calling me names, or giving himself airs of authority, does not convince me of his having taken more pains to find out the truth than I have, but the contrary. Mr. Gifford once said, that 'while I was sitting over my gin and tobacco-pipes, I fancied myself a Leibnitz.' He did not so much as know that I had ever read a metaphysical book :—was I therefore, out of complaisance or deference to him, to forget whether I had or not ? I am rather disappointed, both on my own account and his, that Mr. Hunt has missed the opportunity of explaining the character of a friend, as clearly as he might have done. He is puzzled to reconcile the shyness of my pretensions with the inveteracy and sturdiness of my principles. I should have thought they were nearly the same thing. Both from disposition and habit, I can *assume* nothing in word, look, or manner. I cannot steal a march upon public opinion in any way. My standing upright, speaking loud, entering a room gracefully, proves nothing ; therefore I neglect these ordinary means of recommending myself to the good graces and admiration of strangers, (and, as it appears, even of philosophers and friends). Why ? Because I have other resources, or, at least, am absorbed in other studies and pursuits. Suppose this absorption to be extreme, and even morbid, that I have brooded over an idea till it has become a kind of substance in my brain, that I have reasons for a thing which I have found out with much labour and pains, and to which I can scarcely do justice without the utmost violence of exertion (and that only to a few persons,)—is this a reason for my playing off my

out-of-the-way notions in all companies, wearing a prim and self-complacent air, as if I were 'the admired of all observers?' or is it not rather an argument, (together with a want of animal spirits,) why I should retire into myself, and perhaps acquire a nervous and uneasy look, from a consciousness of the disproportion between the interest and conviction I feel on certain subjects, and my ability to communicate what weighs upon my own mind to others? If my ideas, which I do not avouch, but suppose, lie below the surface, why am I to be always attempting to dazzle superficial people with them, or smiling, delighted, at my own want of success?

What I have here stated is only the excess of the common and well-known English and scholastic character. I am neither a buffoon, a fop, nor a Frenchman, which Mr. Hunt would have me to be. He finds it odd that I am a close reasoner and a loose dresser. I have been (among other follies) a hard liver as well as a hard thinker; and the consequences of that will not allow me to dress as I please. People in real life are not like players on a stage, who put on a certain look or *costume*, merely for effect. I am aware, indeed, that the gay and airy pen of the author does not seriously probe the errors or misfortunes of his friends—he only glances at their seeming peculiarities, so as to make them odd and ridiculous; for which forbearance few of them will thank him. Why does he assert that I was vain of my hair when it was black, and am equally vain of it now it is grey, when this is true in neither case? This transposition of motives makes me almost doubt whether Lord Byron was thinking so much of the rings on his fingers as his biographer was. These sort of criticisms should be left to women. I am made to wear a little hat, stuck on the top of my head the wrong way. Nay, I commonly wear a large slouching hat over my eyebrows; and if ever I had another, I must have twisted it about in any shape to get rid of the annoyance. This probably tickled Mr. Hunt's fancy, and retains possession of it, to the exclusion of the obvious truism, that I naturally wear 'a melancholy hat.'

I am charged with using strange gestures and contortions of features in argument, in order to 'look energetic.' One would rather suppose that the heat of the argument produced the extravagance of the gestures, as I am said to be calm at other times. It is like saying that a man in a passion clenches his teeth, not because he is, but in order to seem, angry. Why should everything be construed into air and affectation? With Hamlet, I may say, 'I know not *seems*.'

Again, my old friend and pleasant 'Companion' remarks it, as an anomaly in my character, that I crawl about the Fives-Court like a

cripple till I get the racket in my hand, when I start up as if I was possessed with a devil. I have then a motive for exertion; I lie by for difficulties and extreme cases. *Aut Cæsar aut nullus.* I have no notion of doing nothing with an air of importance, nor should I ever take a liking to the game of battledoor and shuttlecock. I have only seen by accident a page of the unpublished Manuscript relating to the present subject, which I dare say is, on the whole, friendly and just, and which has been suppressed as being too favourable, considering certain prejudices against me.

In matters of taste and feeling, one proof that my conclusions have not been quite shallow or hasty, is the circumstance of their having been lasting. I have the same favourite books, pictures, passages that I ever had: I may therefore presume that they will last me my life—nay, I may indulge a hope that my thoughts will survive me. This continuity of impression is the only thing on which I pride myself. Even L——, whose relish of certain things is as keen and earnest as possible, takes a surfeit of admiration, and I should be afraid to ask about his select authors or particular friends, after a lapse of ten years. As to myself, any one knows where to have me. What I have once made up my mind to, I abide by to the end of the chapter. One cause of my independence of opinion is, I believe, the liberty I give to others, or the very diffidence and distrust of making converts. I should be an excellent man on a jury: I might say little, but should starve 'the other eleven obstinate fellows' out. I remember Mr. Godwin writing to Mr. Wordsworth, that 'his tragedy of Antonio could not fail of success.' It was damned past all redemption. I said to Mr. Wordsworth that I thought this a natural consequence; for how could any one have a dramatic turn of mind who judged entirely of others from himself? Mr. Godwin might be convinced of the excellence of his work; but how could he know that others would be convinced of it, unless by supposing that they were as wise as himself, and as infallible critics of dramatic poetry—so many Aristotles sitting in judgment on Euripides! This shows why pride is connected with shyness and reserve; for the really proud have not so high an opinion of the generality as to suppose that they can understand them, or that there is any common measure between them. So Dryden exclaims of his opponents with bitter disdain—

'Nor can I think what thoughts they can conceive.'

I have not sought to make partisans, still less did I dream of making enemies; and have therefore kept my opinions myself, whether they were currently adopted or not. To get others to come into our

ways of thinking, we must go over to theirs; and it is necessary to follow, in order to lead. At the time I lived here formerly, I had no suspicion that I should ever become a voluminous writer; yet I had just the same confidence in my feelings before I had ventured to air them in public as I have now. Neither the outcry *for* or *against* moves me a jot: I do not say that the one is not more agreeable than the other.

Not far from the spot where I write, I first read Chaucer's *Flower and Leaf*, and was charmed with that young beauty, shrouded in her bower, and listening with ever-fresh delight to the repeated song of the nightingale close by her—the impression of the scene, the vernal landscape, the cool of the morning, the gushing notes of the songstress,

'And ayen, methought she sung close by mine ear,'

is as vivid as if it had been of yesterday; and nothing can persuade me that that is not a fine poem. I do not find this impression conveyed in Dryden's version, and therefore nothing can persuade me that that is as fine. I used to walk out at this time with Mr. and Miss L—— of an evening, to look at the Claude Lorraine skies over our heads, melting from azure into purple and gold, and to gather mushrooms, that sprung up at our feet, to throw into our hashed mutton at supper. I was at that time an enthusiastic admirer of Claude, and could dwell for ever on one or two of the finest prints from him hung round my little room; the fleecy flocks, the bending trees, the winding streams, the groves, the nodding temples, the air-wove hills, and distant sunny vales; and tried to translate them into their lovely living hues. People then told me that Wilson was much superior to Claude. I did not believe them. Their pictures have since been seen together at the British Institution, and all the world have come into my opinion. I have not, on that account, given it up. I will not compare our hashed mutton with Amelia's; but it put us in mind of it, and led to a discussion, sharply seasoned and well sustained, till midnight, the result of which appeared some years after in the Edinburgh Review. Have I a better opinion of those criticisms on that account, or should I therefore maintain them with greater vehemence and tenaciousness? Oh no! Both rather with less, now that they are before the public, and it is for them to make their election.

It is in looking back to such scenes that I draw my best consolation for the future. Later impressions come and go, and serve to fill up the intervals; but these are my standing resource, my true classics. If I have had few real pleasures or advantages, my ideas,

from their sinewy texture, have been to me in the nature of realities; and if I should not be able to add to the stock, I can live by husbanding the interest. As to my speculations, there is little to admire in them but my admiration of others; and whether they have an echo in time to come or not, I have learned to set a grateful value on the past, and am content to wind up the account of what is personal only to myself and the immediate circle of objects in which I have moved, with an act of easy oblivion,

'And curtain close such scene from every future view.'

## BYRON AND WORDSWORTH

*The London Weekly Review.*] [*April* 5, 1828.

I AM much surprised at Lord Byron's haste to return a volume of Spenser, which was lent him by Mr. Hunt, and at his apparent indifference to the progress and (if he pleased) *advancement* of poetry up to the present day. Did he really think that all genius was concentred in his own time, or in his own bosom? With his pride of ancestry, had he no curiosity to explore the heraldry of intellect? or did he regard the Muse as an upstart—a mere modern *blue-stocking* and fine lady? I am afraid that high birth and station, instead of being (as Mr. Burke predicates,) 'a cure for a narrow and selfish mind,' only make a man more full of himself, and, instead of enlarging and refining his views, impatient of any but the most inordinate and immediate stimulus. I do not recollect, in all Lord Byron's writings, a single recurrence to a feeling or object that had ever excited an interest before; there is no display of natural affection—no twining of the heart round any object: all is the restless and disjointed effect of first impressions, of novelty, contrast, surprise, grotesque costume, or sullen grandeur. *His* beauties are the *houris* of Paradise, the favourites of a seraglio, the changing visions of a feverish dream. His poetry, it is true, is stately and dazzling, arched like a rainbow, of bright and lovely hues, painted on the cloud of his own gloomy temper—perhaps to disappear as soon! It is easy to account for the antipathy between him and Mr. Wordsworth. Mr. Wordsworth's poetical mistress is a Pamela; Lord Byron's an Eastern princess or a Moorish maid. It is the extrinsic, the uncommon that captivates him, and all the rest he holds in sovereign contempt. This is the obvious result of pampered luxury and high-born sentiments. The mind, like the

palace in which it has been brought up, admits none but new and costly furniture. From a scorn of homely simplicity, and a surfeit of the artificial, it has but one resource left in exotic manners and preternatural effect. So we see in novels, written by ladies of quality, all the marvellous allurements of a fairy tale, jewels, quarries of diamonds, giants, magicians, condors and ogres.[1] The author of the Lyrical Ballads describes the lichen on the rock, the withered fern, with some peculiar feeling that he has about them: the author of Childe Harold describes the stately cypress, or the fallen column, with the feeling that every schoolboy has about them. The world is a grown schoolboy, and relishes the latter most. When Rousseau called out—'*Ah! voila de la pervenche!*' in a transport of joy at sight of the periwinkle, because he had first seen this little blue flower in company with Madame Warens thirty years before, I cannot help thinking, that any astonishment expressed at the sight of a palm-tree, or even of Pompey's Pillar, is vulgar compared to this! Lord Byron, when he does not saunter down Bond-street, goes into the East: when he is not occupied with the passing topic, he goes back two thousand years, at one poetic, gigantic stride! But instead of the sweeping mutations of empire, and the vast lapses of duration, shrunk up into an antithesis, commend me to the 'slow and creeping foot of time,' in the commencement of Ivanhoe, where the jester and the swine-herd watch the sun going down behind the low-stunted trees of the forest, and their loitering and impatience make the summer's day seem so long, that we wonder how we have ever got to the end of the six hundred years that have passed since! That where the face of nature has changed, time should have rolled on its course, is but a common-place discovery; but that where all seems the same, (the long rank grass, and the stunted oaks, and the innocent pastoral landscape,) all should have changed—this is to me the burthen and the mystery. The ruined pile is a memento and a monument to him that reared it—oblivion has here done but half its work; but what yearnings, what vain conflicts with its fate come over the soul in the other case, which makes man seem like a grasshopper—an insect of the hour, and all that he is, or that others have been—nothing!

[1] See Ada Reis.

# ON CANT AND HYPOCRISY

*A Fragment*

*The London Weekly Review.*] [*December* 6, 1828.

'If to do were as easy as to teach others what were good to be done, chapels had been churches, and poor men's cottages princes' palaces.'

Mr. Addison, it is said, was fond of tippling; and Curl, it is added, when he called on him in the morning, used to ask as a particular favour for a glass of Canary, by way of ingratiating himself, and that the other might have a pretence to join him and finish the bottle. He fell a martyr to this habit, and yet (some persons more nice than wise exclaim,) he desired that the young Earl of Warwick might attend him on his death-bed, 'to see how a Christian could die!' I see no inconsistency nor hypocrisy in this. A man may be a good Christian, a sound believer, and a sincere lover of virtue, and have, notwithstanding, one or more failings. If he had recommended it to others to get drunk, then I should have said he was a hypocrite, and that his pretended veneration for the Christian religion was a mere cloak put on to suit the purposes of fashion or convenience. His doing what it condemned was no proof of any such thing: 'The spirit was willing, but the flesh was weak.' He is a hypocrite who professes what he does not believe; not he who does not practice all he wishes or approves. It might on the same ground be argued, that a man is a hypocrite who admires Raphael or Shakespeare, because he cannot paint like the one, or write like the other. If any one really despised what he affected outwardly to admire, this would be hypocrisy. If he affected to admire it a great deal more than he really did, this would be cant. Sincerity has to do with the connexion between our words and thoughts, and not between our belief and actions. The last constantly belie the strongest convictions and resolutions in the best of men; it is only the base and dishonest who give themselves credit with their tongue, for sentiments and opinions which in their hearts they disown.

I do not therefore think that the old theological maxim—'The greater the sinner, the greater the saint'—is so utterly unfounded. There is some mixture of truth in it. For as long as man is composed of two parts, body and soul; and while these are allowed to pull different ways, I see no reason why, in proportion to the length the one goes, the opposition or reaction of the other should not be more violent. It is certain, for example, that no one makes such good resolutions as the sot and the gambler in their moments

of repentance, or can be more impressed with the horrors of their situation;—should this disposition, instead of a transient, idle pang, by chance become lasting, who can be supposed to feel the beauty of temperance and economy more, or to look back with greater gratitude to their escape from the trammels of vice and passion? Would the ingenious and elegant author of the SPECTATOR feel less regard for the Scriptures, because they denounced in pointed terms the infirmity that 'most easily beset him,' that was the torment of his life, and the cause of his death? Such reasoning would be true, if man was a simple animal or a logical machine, and all his faculties and impulses were in strict unison; instead of which they are eternally at variance, and no one hates or takes part against himself more heartily or heroically than does the same individual. Does he not pass sentence on his own conduct? Is not his conscience both judge and accuser? What else is the meaning of all our resolutions against ourselves, as well as of our exhortations to others? *Video meliora proboque, deteriora sequor*, is not the language of hypocrisy, but of human nature.

The hypocrisy of priests has been a butt for ridicule in all ages; but I am not sure that there has not been more wit than philosophy in it. A priest, it is true, is obliged to affect a greater degree of sanctity than ordinary men, and probably more than he possesses; and this is so far, I am willing to allow, hypocrisy and solemn grimace. But I cannot admit, that though he may exaggerate, or even make an ostentatious display of religion and virtue through habit and spiritual pride, that this is a proof he has not these sentiments in his heart, or that his whole behaviour is the mere acting of a part. His character, his motives, are not altogether pure and sincere: are they therefore all false and hollow? No such thing. It is contrary to all our observation and experience so to interpret it. We all wear some disguise—make some professions—use some artifice to set ourselves off as being better than we are; and yet it is not denied that we have some good intentions and praiseworthy qualities at bottom, though we may endeavour to keep some others that we think less to our credit as much as possible in the background:—why then should we not extend the same favourable construction to monks and friars, who may be sometimes caught tripping as well as other men—with less excuse, no doubt; but if it is also with greater remorse of conscience, which probably often happens, their pretensions are not all downright, bare-faced imposture. Their sincerity, compared with that of other men, can only be judged of by the proportion between the degree of virtue they profess, and that which they practice, or at least carefully seek to realise. To conceive it otherwise, is to insist that characters

must be all perfect, or all vicious—neither of which suppositions is even possible. If a clergyman is notoriously a drunkard, a debauchee, a glutton, or a scoffer, then for him to lay claim at the same time to extraordinary inspirations of faith or grace, is both scandalous and ridiculous. The scene between the Abbot and the poor brother in the 'Duenna' is an admirable exposure of this double-faced dealing. But because a parson has a relish for the good things of this life, or what is commonly called *a liquorish tooth in his head*, (beyond what he would have it supposed by others, or even by himself,) that he has therefore no fear or belief of the next, I hold for a crude and vulgar prejudice. If a poor half-starved parish priest pays his court to an *olla podrida*, or a venison pasty, with uncommon *gusto*, shall we say that he has no other sentiments in offering his devotions to a crucifix, or in counting his beads? I see no more ground for such an inference, than for affirming that Handel was not in earnest when he sat down to compose a Symphony, because he had at the same time perhaps a bottle of cordials in his cupboard; or that Raphael was not entitled to the epithet of *divine*, because he was attached to the Fornarina! Everything has its turn in this chequered scene of things, unless we prevent it from taking its turn by over-rigid conditions, or drive men to despair or the most callous effrontery, by erecting a standard of perfection, to which no one can conform in reality! Thomson, in his 'Castle of Indolence,' (a subject on which his pen ran riot,) has indulged in rather a free description of 'a little round, fat, oily man of God—

> 'Who shone all glittering with ungodly dew,
> If a tight damsel chanced to trippen by;
> Which, when observed, he shrunk into his mew,
> And straight would recollect his piety anew.'

Now, was the piety in this case the less real, because it had been forgotten for a moment? Or even if this motive should not prove the strongest in the end, would this therefore show that it was none, which is necessary to the argument here combated, or to make out our little plump priest a very knave! A priest may be honest, and yet err; as a woman may be modest, and yet half-inclined to be a rake. So the virtue of prudes may be suspected, though not their sincerity. The strength of their passions may make them more conscious of their weakness, and more cautious of exposing themselves; but not more to blind others than as a guard upon themselves. Again, suppose a clergyman hazards a jest upon sacred subjects, does it follow that he does not believe a word of the matter? Put the case that any one else, encouraged

by his example, takes up the banter or levity, and see what effect it will have upon the reverend divine. He will turn round like a serpent trod upon, with all the vehemence and asperity of the most bigoted orthodoxy. Is this dictatorial and exclusive spirit then put on merely as a mask and to browbeat others? No; but he thinks he is privileged to trifle with the subject safely himself, from the store of evidence he has in reserve, and from the nature of his functions; but he is afraid of serious consequences being drawn from what others might say, or from his seeming to countenance it; and the moment the Church is in danger, or his own faith brought in question, his attachment to each becomes as visible as his hatred to those who dare to impugn either the one or the other. A woman's attachment to her husband is not to be suspected, if she will allow no one to abuse him but herself! It has been remarked, that with the spread of liberal opinions, or a more general scepticism on articles of faith, the clergy and religious persons in general have become more squeamish and jealous of any objections to their favourite doctrines: but this is what must follow in the natural course of things—the resistance being always in proportion to the danger; and arguments and books that were formerly allowed to pass unheeded, because it was supposed impossible they could do any mischief, are now denounced or prohibited with the most zealous vigilance, from a knowledge of the contagious nature of their influence and contents. So in morals, it is obvious that the greatest nicety of expression and allusion must be observed, where the manners are the most corrupt, and the imagination most easily excited, not out of mere affectation, but as a dictate of common sense and decency.

One of the finest remarks that has been made in modern times, is that of Lord Shaftesbury, that there is no such thing as a perfect Theist, or an absolute Atheist; that whatever may be the general conviction entertained on the subject, the evidence is not and cannot be at all times equally present to the mind; that even if it were, we are not in the same humour to receive it: a fit of the gout, a shower of rain shakes our best-established conclusions; and according to circumstances and the frame of mind we are in, our belief varies from the most sanguine enthusiasm to lukewarm indifference, or the most gloomy despair. There is a point of conceivable faith which might prevent any lapse from virtue, and reconcile all contrarieties between theory and practice; but this is not to be looked for in the ordinary course of nature, and is reserved for the abodes of the blest. Here, 'upon this bank and shoal of time,' the utmost we can hope to attain is, a strong habitual belief in the excellence of virtue, or the dispensations of Providence; and the conflict of the passions, and their

occasional mastery over us, far from disproving or destroying this general, rational conviction, often fling us back more forcibly upon it, and like other infidelities and misunderstandings, produce all the alternate remorse and raptures of repentance and reconciliation.

It has been frequently remarked that the most obstinate heretic or confirmed sceptic, witnessing the service of the Roman Catholic church, the elevation of the host amidst the sounds of music, the pomp of ceremonies, the embellishments of art, feels himself spell-bound: and is almost persuaded to become a renegade to his reason or his religion. Even in hearing a vespers chaunted on the stage, or in reading an account of a torch-light procession in a romance, a superstitious awe creeps over the frame, and we are momentarily charmed out of ourselves. When such is the obvious and involuntary influence of circumstances on the imagination, shall we say that a monkish recluse surrounded from his childhood by all this pomp, a stranger to any other faith, who has breathed no other atmosphere, and all whose meditations are bent on this one subject both by interest and habit and duty, is to be set down as a rank and heartless mountebank in the professions he makes of belief in it, because his thoughts may sometimes wander to forbidden subjects, or his feet stumble on forbidden ground? Or shall not the deep shadows of the woods in Vallombrosa enhance the solemnity of this feeling, or the icy horrors of the Grand Chartreux add to its elevation and its purity? To argue otherwise is to misdeem of human nature, and to limit its capacities for good or evil by some narrow-minded standard of our own. Man is neither a God nor a brute; but there is a prosaic and a poetical side to everything concerning him, and it is as impossible absolutely and for a constancy to exclude either one or the other from the mind, as to make him live without air or food. The *ideal*, the empire of thought and aspiration after truth and good, is inseparable from the nature of an intellectual being—what right have we then to catch at every strife which in the mortified professors of religion the spirit wages with the flesh as grossly vicious, or at every doubt, the bare suggestion of which fills them with consternation and despair, as a proof of the most glaring hypocrisy? The grossnesses of religion and its stickling for mere forms as its essence, have given a handle, and a just one, to its impugners. At the feast of Ramadan (says Voltaire) the Mussulmans wash and pray five times a day, and then fall to cutting one another's throats again with the greatest deliberation and good-will. The two things, I grant, are sufficiently at variance; but they are, I contend, equally sincere in both. The Mahometans are savages, but they are not the less true believers—they hate their enemies as heartily as they revere the Koran. This,

instead of showing the fallacy of the *ideal* principle, shows its universality and indestructible essence. Let a man be as bad as he will, as little refined as possible, and indulge whatever hurtful passions or gross vices he thinks proper, these cannot occupy the whole of his time; and in the intervals between one scoundrel action and another he may and must have better thoughts, and may have recourse to those of religion (true or false) among the number, without in this being guilty of hypocrisy or of making a jest of what is considered as sacred. This, I take it, is the whole secret of Methodism, which is a sort of modern vent for the ebullitions of the spirit through the gaps of unrighteousness.

We often see that a person condemns in another the very thing he is guilty of himself. Is this hypocrisy? It may, or it may not. If he really feels none of the disgust and abhorrence he expresses, this is quackery and impudence. But if he really expresses what he feels, (and he easily may, for it is the abstract idea he contemplates in the case of another, and the immediate temptation to which he yields in his own, so that he probably is not even conscious of the identity or connexion between the two,) then this is not hypocrisy, but want of strength and keeping in the moral sense. All morality consists in squaring our actions and sentiments to our ideas of what is fit and proper; and it is the incessant struggle and alternate triumph of the two principles, the *ideal* and the physical, that keeps up this 'mighty coil and pudder' about vice and virtue, and is one great source of all the good and evil in the world. The mind of man is like a clock that is always running down, and requires to be as constantly wound up. The *ideal* principle is the master-key that winds it up, and without which it would come to a stand: the sensual and selfish feelings are the dead weights that pull it down to the gross and grovelling. Till the intellectual faculty is destroyed, (so that the mind sees nothing beyond itself, or the present moment,) it is impossible to have all brutal depravity: till the material and physical are done away with, (so that it shall contemplate everything from a purely spiritual and disinterested point of view,) it is impossible to have all virtue. There must be a mixture of the two, as long as man is compounded of opposite materials, a contradiction and an eternal competition for the mastery. I by no means think a single bad action condemns a man, for he probably condemns it as much as you do; nor a single bad habit, for he is probably trying all his life to get rid of it. A man is only thoroughly profligate when he has lost the sense of right and wrong; or a thorough hypocrite, when he has not even the wish to be what he appears. The greatest offence against virtue is to speak ill of it. To recommend certain things is worse than to practise

them. There may be an excuse for the last in the frailty of passion; but the former can arise from nothing but an utter depravity of disposition. Any one may yield to temptation, and yet feel a sincere love and aspiration after virtue: but he who maintains vice in theory, has not even the conception or capacity for virtue in his mind. Men err: fiends only make a mock at goodness.

## THE SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED

*The London Weekly Review.*] [*December* 13, 1828.

We sometimes deceive ourselves, and think worse of human nature than it deserves, in consequence of judging of character from names, and classes, and modes of life. No one is simply and absolutely any one thing, though he may be branded with it as a name. Some persons have expected to see his crimes written in the face of a murderer, and have been disappointed because they did not, as if this impeached the distinction between virtue and vice. Not at all. The circumstance only showed that the man was other things, and had other feelings besides those of a murderer. If he had nothing else,—if he had fed on nothing else,—if he had dreamt of nothing else, but schemes of murder, his features would have expressed nothing else: but this perfection in vice is not to be expected from the contradictory and mixed nature of our motives. Humanity is to be met with in a den of robbers; nay, modesty in a brothel. Even among the most abandoned of the other sex, there is not unfrequently found to exist (contrary to all that is generally supposed) one strong and individual attachment, which remains unshaken to the last. Virtue may be said to steal, like a guilty thing, into the secret haunts of vice and infamy; it clings to their devoted victim, and will not be driven quite away. Nothing can destroy the human heart. Again, there is a heroism in crime, as well as in virtue. Vice and infamy have also their altars and their religion. This makes nothing in their favour, but is a proof of the heroical disinterestedness of man's nature, and that whatever he does, he must fling a dash of romance and sublimity into it; just as some grave biographer has said of Shakespeare, that 'even when he killed a calf, he made a speech and did it in a great style.'

It is then impossible to get rid of this original distinction and contradictory bias, and to reduce everything to the system of French levity and Epicurean indifference. Wherever there is a capacity of conceiving of things as different from what they are, there must be a principle of taste and selection—a disposition to make them better, and a power to make them worse. Ask a Parisian milliner if she does not think one bonnet more becoming than another—a Parisian

dancing-master if French grace is not better than English awkwardness—a French cook if all sauces are alike—a French *blacklegs* if all throws are equal on the dice? It is curious that the French nation restrict rigid rules and fixed principles to cookery and the drama, and maintain that the great drama of human life is entirely a matter of caprice and fancy. No one will assert that Raphael's histories, that Claude's landscapes are not better than a daub: but if the expression in one of Raphael's faces is better than the most mean and vulgar, how resist the consequence that the feeling so expressed is better also? It does not appear to me that all faces or all actions are alike. If goodness were only a theory, it were a pity it should be lost to the world. There are a number of things, the idea of which is a clear gain to the mind. Let people, for instance, rail at friendship, genius, freedom, as long as they will—the very names of these despised qualities are better than anything else that could be substituted for them, and embalm even the most envenomed satire against them. It is no small consideration that the mind is capable even of feigning such things. So I would contend against that reasoning which would have it thought that if religion is not true, there is no difference between mankind and the beasts that perish;—I should say, that this distinction is equally proved, if religion is supposed to be a mere fabrication of the human mind; the capacity to conceive it makes the difference. The idea alone of an over-ruling Providence, or of a future state, is as much a distinctive mark of a superiority of nature, as the invention of the mathematics, which are true,—or of poetry, which is a fable. Whatever the truth or falsehood of our speculations, the power to make them is peculiar to ourselves.

The contrariety and warfare of different faculties and dispositions within us has not only given birth to the Manichean and Gnostic heresies, and to other superstitions of the East, but will account for many of the mummeries and dogmas both of Popery and Calvinism,—confession, absolution, justification by faith, &c.; which, in the hopelessness of attaining perfection, and our dissatisfaction with ourselves for falling short of it, are all substitutes for actual virtue, and an attempt to throw the burthen of a task, to which we are unequal or only half disposed, on the merits of others, or on outward forms, ceremonies, and professions of faith. Hence the crowd of

> 'Eremites and friars,
> White, black, and grey, with all their trumpery.'

If we do not conform to the law, we at least acknowledge the jurisdiction of the court. A person does wrong; he is sorry for it; and as he still feels himself liable to error, he is desirous to make

atonement as well as he can, by ablutions, by tithes, by penance, by sacrifices, or other voluntary demonstrations of obedience, which are in his power, though his passions are not, and which prove that his will is not refractory, and that his understanding is right towards God. The stricter tenets of Calvinism, which allow of no medium between grace and reprobation, and doom man to eternal punishment for every breach of the moral law, as an equal offence against infinite truth and justice, proceed (like the paradoxical doctrine of the Stoics) from taking a half-view of this subject, and considering man as amenable only to the dictates of his understanding and his conscience, and not excusable from the temptations and frailty of human ignorance and passion. The mixing up of religion and morality together, or the making us accountable for every word, thought, or action, under no less a responsiblity than our everlasting future welfare or misery, has also added incalculably to the difficulties of self-knowledge, has superinduced a violent and spurious state of feeling, and made it almost impossible to distinguish the boundaries between the true and false, in judging of human conduct and motives. A religious man is afraid of looking into the state of his soul, lest at the same time he should reveal it to Heaven; and tries to persuade himself that by shutting his eyes to his true character and feelings, they will remain a profound secret both here and hereafter. This is a strong engine and irresistible inducement to self-deception; and the more zealous any one is in his convictions of the truth of religion, the more we may suspect the sincerity of his pretensions to piety and morality.

Thus, though I think there is very little downright hypocrisy in the world, I do think there is a great deal of *cant*—'cant religious, cant political, cant literary,' &c. as Lord Byron said. Though few people have the face to set up for the very thing they in their hearts despise, we almost all want to be thought better than we are, and affect a greater admiration or abhorrence of certain things than we really feel. Indeed, some degree of affectation is as necessary to the mind as dress is to the body; we must overact our part in some measure, in order to produce any effect at all. There was formerly the two hours' sermon, the long-winded grace, the nasal drawl, the uplifted hands and eyes; all which, though accompanied with some corresponding emotion, expressed more than was really felt, and were in fact intended to make up for the conscious deficiency. As our interest in anything wears out with time and habit, we exaggerate the outward symptoms of zeal as mechanical helps to devotion, dwell the longer on our words as they are less felt, and hence the very origin of the term, *cant*. The cant of sentimentality has succeeded to that of religion. There is a cant of humanity, of patriotism and loyalty—

not that people do not feel these emotions, but they make too great a *fuss* about them, and drawl out the expression of them till they tire themselves and others. There is a cant about Shakespeare. There is a cant about *Political Economy* just now. In short, there is and must be a cant about everything that excites a considerable degree of attention and interest, and that people would be thought to know and care rather more about than they actually do. Cant is the voluntary overcharging or prolongation of a real sentiment; hypocrisy is the setting up a pretension to a feeling you never had and have no wish for. Mr. Coleridge is made up of *cant*, that is, of mawkish affectation and sensibility; but he has not sincerity enough to be a *hypocrite*, that is, he has not hearty dislike or contempt enough for anything, to give the lie to his puling professions of admiration and esteem for it. The fuss that Mr. Liberal Snake makes about Political Economy is not cant, but what Mr. Theodore Hook politely calls *humbug*; he himself is hardly the dupe of his own pompous reasoning, but he wishes to make it the *stalking-horse* of his ambition or interest to sneak into a place and curry favour with the Government. . . .

## POETRY

*The Atlas.*] [*March* 8, 1829.

As there are two kinds of rhyme, one that is rhyme to the ear, and another to the eye only; so there may be said to be two kinds of poetry, one that is a description of objects to those who have never seen or but slightly studied them; the other is a description of objects addressed to those who have seen and are intimately acquainted with them, and expressing the feeling which is the result of such knowledge. It is needless to add that the first kind of poetry is comparatively superficial and commonplace; the last profound, lofty, nay often divine. Take an example (one out of a thousand) from Shakspeare. In enumerating the wished-for contents of her basket of flowers, *Perdita* in the *Winter's Tale* mentions among others——

> 'Daffodils
> That come before the swallow dares, and take
> The winds of March with beauty; violets dim,
> But sweeter than the lids of Juno's eyes
> Or Cytherea's breath; pale primroses
> That die unmarried ere they can behold
> Bright Phœbus in his strength, a malady
> Most incident to maids.'

This passage which knocks down John Bull with its perfumed and melting softness, and savours of 'that fine madness which our first poets had,' is a mystery, an *untranslateable* language, to all France: Racine could not have conceived what it was about—the stupidest Englishman feels a certain pride and pleasure in it. What a privilege (if that were all) to be born on this the cloudy and poetical side of the Channel! We may in part clear up this contradiction in tastes by the clue above given. The French are more apt at taking the patterns of their ideas from words; we, who are slower and heavier, are obliged to look closer at things before we can pronounce upon them at all, which in the end perhaps opens a larger field both of observation and fancy. Thus the phrase 'violets *dim*,' to those who have never seen the object, or who, having paid no attention to it, refer to the description for their notion of it, seems to convey a slur rather than a compliment, dimness being no beauty in itself; so this part of the story would not have been ventured upon in French or tinsel poetry. But to those who have seen, and been as it were enamoured of the little hedge-row candidate for applause, looking at it again and again (as misers contemplate their gold—as fine ladies hang over their jewels), till its image has sunk into the soul, what other word is there that (far from putting the reader out of conceit with it) so well recals its deep purple glow, its retired modesty, its sullen, conscious beauty? Those who have not seen the flower cannot form an idea of its character, nor understand the line without it. Its aspect is dull, obtuse, faint, absorbed; but at the same time soft, luxurious, proud, and full of meaning. People who look at nature without being sensible to these distinctions and contrarieties of feeling, had better (instead of the flower) look only at the label on the stalk. Connoisseurs in French wines pretend to know all these depths and refinements of taste, though connoisseurs in French poetry pretend to know them not. To return to our text——

> 'Violets dim,
> But sweeter than the lids of Juno's eyes
> Or Cytherea's breath.'

How *bizarre*! cries one hypercritic. What far-fetched metaphors! exclaims another. We shall not dwell on the allusion to 'Cytherea's breath,' it is obvious enough: but how can the violet's smell be said to be 'sweeter than the lids of Juno's eyes?' Oh! honeyed words, how ill understood! And is there no true and rooted analogy between our different sensations, as well as a positive and literal identity? Is there not a sugared, melting, half-sleepy look in some eyelids, like the luscious, languid smell of flowers? How otherwise

express that air of scorn and tenderness which breathes from them? Is there not a balmy dew upon them which one would kiss off? Speak, ye lovers! if any such remain in these degenerate days to take the part of genuine poetry against cold, barren criticism; for poetry is nothing but an intellectual love——Nature is the poet's mistress, and the heart in his case lends words and harmonious utterance to the tongue.——Again, how full of truth and pity is the turn which is given to the description of the pale and faded primrose, watching for the sun's approach as for the torch of Hymen! Milton has imitated this not so well in 'cowslips wan that hang the pensive head.' Cowslips are of a gold colour, rather than wan. In speaking of the daffodils, it seems as if our poet had been struck with these 'lowly children of the ground' on their first appearance, and seeing what bright and unexpected guests they were at that cold, comfortless season, wondered how 'they came before the swallow (the harbinger of summer) dared,' and being the only lovely thing in nature, fancied the winds of March were taken with them, and tamed their fury at the sight. No one but a poet who has spent his youth in the company of nature could so describe it, as no reader who has not experienced the same elementary sensations, their combinations and contrasts, can properly enter into it when so described. The finest poetry, then, is not a paradox nor a trite paraphrase; but a bold and happy enunciation of truths and feelings deeply implanted in the mind——Apollo, the god of poetry and day, evolving the thoughts of the breast, as he does the seed from the frozen earth, or enables the flower to burst its folds. Poetry is, indeed, a fanciful structure; but a fanciful structure raised on the groundwork of the strongest and most intimate associations of our ideas: otherwise, it is good for nothing, *vox et preterea nihil*. A literal description goes for nothing in poetry, a pure fiction is of as little worth; but it is the extreme beauty and power of an impression with all its accompaniments, or the very intensity and truth of feeling, that pushes the poet over the verge of matter-of-fact, and justifies him in resorting to the licence of fiction to express what without his 'winged words' must have remained for ever untold. Thus the feeling of the contrast between the roughness and bleakness of the winds of March and the tenderness and beauty of the flowers of spring is already in the reader's mind, if he be an observer of nature: the poet, to show the utmost extent and conceivable effect of this contrast, *feigns* that the winds themselves are sensible of it and smit with the beauty on which they commit such rude assaults. Lord Byron, whose imagination was not of this compound character, and more wilful than natural, produced splendid exaggerations. Mr. Shelley, who felt the want of originality without

the power to supply it, distorted every thing from what it was, and his pen produced only abortions. The one would say that the sun was a 'ball of dazzling fire;' the other, not knowing what to say, but determined 'to elevate and surprize,' would swear that it was *black*. This latter class of poetry may be denominated the *Apocalyptical*.

## ENGLISH GRAMMAR

*The Atlas.*] [*March* 15, 1829.

This is one of those subjects on which the human understanding has played the fool, almost as egregiously, though with less dire consequences, than on many others; or rather one on which it has not chosen to exert itself at all, being hoodwinked and led blindfold by mere precedent and authority. Scholars who have made and taught from English grammars were previously and systematically initiated in the Greek and Latin tongues, so that they have, without deigning to notice the difference, taken the rules of the latter and applied them indiscriminately and dogmatically to the former. As well might they pretend that there is a *dual number* in the Latin language because there is one in the Greek.

The *Definitions* alone are able to corrupt a whole generation of ingenuous youth. They seem calculated for no other purpose than to *mystify* and *stultify* the understanding, and to inoculate it betimes with a due portion of credulity and verbal sophistry. After repeating them by rote, to maintain that two and two makes five is easy, and a thing of course. What appears most extraordinary is that notwithstanding the complete exposure of their fallacy and nonsense by Horne Tooke and others, the same system and method of instruction should be persisted in; and that grammar succeeds grammar and edition edition, re-echoing the same point-blank contradictions and shallow terms. Establishments and endowments of learning (which subsist on a 'foregone conclusion') may have something to do with it; independently of which, and for each person's individual solace, the more senseless the absurdity and the longer kept up, the more reluctant does the mind seem to part with it, whether in the greatest things or mere trifles and technicalities; for in the latter, as the retracting an error could produce no startling sensation, and be accompanied with no redeeming enthusiasm, its detection must be a pure loss and pitiful mortification. One might suppose, that out of so many persons as have their attention directed to this subject, some few would find out their mistake and protest against the common practice; but the greater

the number of professional labourers in the vineyard, who seek not truth but a livelihood, and can *pay with words* more currently than with things, the less chance must there be of this, since the majority will always set their faces against it, and insist upon the old *Mumpsimus* in preference to the new *Sumpsimus*. A schoolmaster who should go so far out of his way as to take the Diversions of Purley for a text-book, would be regarded by his brethren of the rod as 'a man of Ind,' and would soon have the dogs of the village bark at him. It is said without blushing, by both masters and ushers who do not chuse to be 'wise above what is written,' that a noun is the name of a *thing*, *i.e.* substance, as if *love*, *honour*, *colour*, were the names of substances. An adjective is defined to be the name of a quality; and yet in the expressions, a *gold* snuff-box, a *wooden* spoon, an *iron* chest, &c., the words *gold*, *wooden*, *iron*, are allowed by all these profound writers, grammarians, and logicians, to be essentially adjectives. A verb is likewise defined to be a word denoting *being*, *action*, or *suffering*; and yet the words *being*, *action*, *suffering* (or passion), are all substantives; so that these words cannot be supposed to have any reference to the things whose names they bear, if it be the peculiar and sole office of the verb to denote them. If a system were made in burlesque and purposely to call into question and expose its own nakedness, it could not go beyond this, which is gravely taught in all seminaries, and patiently learnt by all school-boys as an exercise and discipline of the intellectual faculties. Again, it is roundly asserted that there are *six cases* (why not seven?) in the English language; and a case is defined to be a peculiar termination or inflection added to a noun to show its position in the sentence. Now in the Latin language there are no doubt a number of cases, inasmuch as there are a number of inflections;[1] and for the same reason (if words have a meaning) in the English Language there are none, or only one, the genitive; because if we except this, there is no inflection or variety whatever in the terminnations. Thus to instance in the present noun—A case, Of a case, To a case, A case, O case, From a case—they tell you that the word *case* is here its own nominative, genitive, dative, accusative, vocative, and ablative, though the deuce of any case—that is inflection of the noun—is there in the case. Nevertheless, many a pedagogue would swear till he was black in the face that it is so; and would lie awake many a restless night boiling with rage and vexation that any one should be so lost to shame and reason as to suspect that there is here also a distinction without a difference. In strictness, in the Latin word there are only four, *casus*, *casui*, *casum*, *casu*; and the rest are conceded out of

[1] This was necessary in Latin, where no order was observed in the words of a sentence: in English the juxtaposition generally determines the connection.

uniformity with other cases where the terminations are six times varied :[1] but why insist on the full complement, where there is no case in the whole language (but for the arbitrary one already excepted) to bear it out? Again, it is agreed on all hands, that English nouns have genders. Except with a few, where the termination is borrowed from another language, such as *Empress*, &c., there is no possibility of generally telling the sex implied from the form of the termination: but men looking at the point with their Latin eyes, see genders wherever they have been accustomed to find them in a foreign tongue. The difference of sex is vernacularly conveyed in English by a different word —*man*, *woman*, *stag*, *deer*, *king*, *queen*, &c.; and there is no such thing as conventional gender in neutral things—*house*, *church*, *field*, and so on. All this might be excusable as a prejudice or oversight; but then why persist in it in the thirty-eighth edition of a standard book published by the great firm in Paternoster-row? We sometimes think mankind have a propensity to lying not more in matters-of-fact than theory. They maintain what they know to be without a shadow of foundation, and in the sheer spirit of contradiction, or because they hate to be convinced. In the same manner as the cases and genders of nouns, the whole ramification of the verb is constructed, and hung up for the admiration of the credulous upon the ideal of the Latin and Greek verb, with all its tenses, persons, moods, and participles, whether there be anything more than a mere skeleton of a resemblance to suspend all this learned patch-work upon or not. 'I *love*, thou *lovest* he *loves*; we, ye, they *love*.' There is a difference in the three first, so that from announcing the verb, you know the prefix; but in the three last, what difference is there, what sign of separation from one another, or from the first person singular? 'I *loved*' is the past tense doubtless: it is a difference of inflection denoting time: but 'I *did* love, I *have loved*, I *will*, *can*, *shall*, *would* love,' are not properly tenses or moods of the verb *love*, but other verbs with the infinitive or participle of the first verb appended to them. Thus is our irregular verb professionally licked into regularity and shape. When the thing is wanting it is supplied by the name. *Empedocles was a cobbler, even when he did not cobble.* A conjunction is held to be a part of speech without any meaning in itself, but that serves to connect sentences together, such as *that*, *and*, &c. It is proved by Mr. Horne Tooke, that the conjunction *that* is no other than the pronoun *that* (with the words *thing* or *proposition* understood)—as *and* is the imperative of the old Saxon verb *anandad* (to add), upon a similar principle —'I say this *and* (or add) that' —and though it is above fifty years since this luminous discovery was published to the world, no hint of

[1] *Quere*, Is the vocative ever a case?

it has crept into any Grammar used in schools, and by authority. It seems to be taken for granted that all sound and useful knowledge is by rote, and that if it ceased to be so, the Church and State might crumble to pieces like the conjunctions *and* and *that*. There may be some truth in that.

It is strange that Mr. Horne Tooke, with all his logical and etymological acuteness, should have been so bad a metaphysician as to argue that all language was merely a disjointed tissue of names of objects (with certain abbreviations), and that he should have given or attempted no definition of the verb. He barely hints at it in one place, *viz.*—that the verb is *quod loquimur*, the noun *de quo*; that is, the noun expresses the name of any thing or points out the object; the verb signifies the opinion or will of the speaker concerning it. What then becomes of the *infinitive mood*, which neither affirms, denies, nor commands any thing, but is left like a log of wood in the high road of grammar, to be picked up by the first jaunting-car of 'winged words' that comes that way with its moods, persons, and tenses, flying, and turned to any use that may be wanted? Mr. Tooke was in the habit of putting off his guests at Wimbledon with promising to explain some *puzzle* the following Sunday; and he left the world in the dark as to the definition of the verb, much in the same spirit of *badinage* and mystery. We do not know when the deficiency is likely to be supplied, unless it has been done by Mr. Fearn in his little work called Anti-Tooke. We have not seen the publication, but we know the author to be a most able and ingenious man, and capable of lighting upon nice distinctions which few but himself would ever dream of. An excess of modesty, which doubts every thing, is much more favourable to the discovery of truth than that spirit of dogmatism which presumptuously takes every thing for granted; but at the same time it is not equally qualified to place its conclusions in the most advantageous and imposing light; and we accordingly too often find our quacks and impostors collecting a crowd with their drums, trumpets, and *placards* of themselves at the end of a street, while the 'still, small' pipe of truth and simplicity is drowned in the loud din and bray, or forced to retire to a distance to solace itself with its own low tones and fine-drawn distinctions. Having touched upon this subject, we may be allowed to add that some of our most eminent writers, as, for instance, Mr. Maculloch with his *Principles of Political Economy*, and Mr. Mill with his *Elements of Political Economy*, remind us of two barrel-organ grinders in the same street, playing the same tune and contending for precedence and mastery. What is Mozart to any of the four?

# MEMORABILIA OF MR. COLERIDGE

*The Atlas.*] *March* 22, 1829.

He said of an old cathedral, that it always appeared to him like a *petrified religion.*

Hearing some one observe that the religious sentiments introduced in Sheridan's *Pizarro* met with great applause on the stage, he replied, that he thought this a sure sign of the decay of religion; for when people began to patronise it as an amiable theatrical sentiment, they had no longer any real faith in it.

He said of a Mr. H——, a friend of Fox's, who always put himself forward to interpret the great orator's sentiments, and almost took the words out of his mouth, that it put him in mind of the steeple of St. Thomas, on Ludgate-hill, which is constantly getting in the way when you wish to see the dome of St. Paul's.

Seeing a little soiled copy of Thomson's *Seasons* lying in the window-seat of an obscure inn on the sea-coast of Somersetshire, he said, '*That* is true fame.'

He observed of some friend, that he had *thought himself* out of a handsome face, and into a fine one.

He said of the French, that they received and gave out sensations too quickly, to be a people of imagination. He thought Moliere's father must have been an Englishman.

According to Mr. Coleridge, common rhetoricians argued by metaphors; Burke reasoned *in* them.

He considered acuteness as a *shop-boy* quality compared with subtlety of mind; and quoted Paine as an example of the first, Berkeley as the perfection of the last.

He extolled Bishop Butler's *Sermons at the Rolls' Chapel* as full of thought and sound views of philosophy; and conceived that he had proved the love of piety and virtue to be as natural to the mind of man as the delight it receives from the colour of a rose or the smell of a lily. He spoke of the *Analysis* as theological special-pleading.

He had no opinion of Hume, and very idly disputed his originality. He said the whole of his argument on miracles was to be found stated (as an objection) somewhere in Barrow.

He said Thomson was a true poet, but an indolent one. He seldom wrote a good line, but he 'rewarded resolution' by following it up with a bad one. Cowper he regarded as the reformer of the Della Cruscan style in poetry, and the founder of the modern school.

Being asked which he thought the greater man, Milton or Shakspeare, he replied that he could hardly venture to pronounce an

opinion—that Shakspeare appeared to him to have the strength, the stature of his rival, with infinitely more agility; but that he could not bring himself after all to look upon Shakspeare as any thing more than a beardless stripling, and that if he had ever arrived at man's estate, he would not have been a man but a monster of intellect.

Being told that Mrs. Woolstonecroft exerted a very great ascendancy over the mind of her husband, he said—'It was always the case: people of imagination naturally took the lead of people of mere understanding and acquirement.' This was scarcely doing justice to the author of *Caleb Williams*.

He spoke of Mackintosh as deficient in original resources: he was neither the great merchant nor manufacturer of intellectual riches; but the ready warehouseman, who had a large assortment of goods, not properly his own, and who knew where to lay his hand on whatever he wanted. An argument which he had sustained for three hours together with another erudite person on some grand question of philosophy, being boasted of in Coleridge's hearing as a mighty achievement, the latter bluntly answered—'Had there been a man of genius among you, he would have settled the point in five minutes.'

Having been introduced to a well-known wit and professed jester, and his own silence being complained of, he said he should no more think of speaking where Mr. —— was present, than of interrupting an actor on the stage.

Mr. Coleridge preferred Salvator Rosa to Claude, therein erring. He however spoke eloquently and feelingly of pictures, where the subject-matter was poetical, and where 'more was meant than met the eye.' Thus he described the allegorical picture by Giotto in the cemetery at Pisa, the *Triumph of Death*, where the rich, the young, and the prosperous, are shrinking in horror and dismay from the grim monster; and the wretched, the cripple, and the beggar, are invoking his friendly aid, both in words and tones worthy of the subject. Mr. Coleridge's was the only conversation we ever heard in which the ideas seemed set to music—it had the materials of philosophy and the sound of music; or if the thoughts were sometimes poor and worthless, the accompaniment was always fine.

He stated of Henderson, the actor, or some person of whom a very indifferent jest was repeated, that it was the strongest proof of his ability, and of the good things he *must have said* to make his bad ones pass current.

He characterised the *Prometheus Bound* of Æschylus, as being less a drama than an *Ode to Justice*.

He said that formerly men concealed their vices; but now, in the

change of manners and the laxity of theories, they boasted of those they had not.

He sometimes told a story well, though but rarely. He used to speak with some drollery and unction of his meeting in his tour in Germany with a Lutheran clergyman, who expressed a great curiosity about the fate of Dr. Dodd in a Latin gibberish which he could not at first understand. '*Doctorem Tott, Doctorem Tott! Infelix homo, collo suspensus!*'—he called out in an agony of suspense, fitting the action to the word, and the idea of the reverend divine just then occurring to Mr. Coleridge's imagination. The Germans have a strange superstition that Dr. Dodd is still wandering in disguise in the Hartz forest in Germany; and his *Prison Thoughts* are a favourite book with the initiated.

If these remarkable sayings are fewer than the reader might expect, they are all we remember; and we might avail ourselves of the answer which Quevedo puts into the mouth of the door-keeper of Hell, when the poet is surprised to find so few kings in his custody —'There are all that ever existed!'

## PETER PINDAR

*The Atlas.*] [*April* 5, 1829.

This celebrated wit and character lived to a great age, and retained his spirit and faculties to the last. In person he did not at all answer to Mr. Cobbett's description of authors, as a lean, starveling, puny race—'men made after supper of a cheese-paring'—he was large, robust, portly, and florid; or in Chaucer's phrase,

'A manly man to ben an abbot able.'

In his latter years he was blind, and had his head close shaved; and as he sat bare-headed, presented the appearance of a fine old monk—a Luther or a *Friar John*, with the gravity of the one and the wit and fiery turbulence of the other. Peter had something clerical in his aspect: he looked like a venerable father of poetry, or an unworthy son of the church, equally fitted to indict a homily and preach a crusade, or to point an epigram, and was evidently one of those children of Momus in whom the good things of the body had laid the foundation of and given birth to the good things of the mind. He was one of the few authors who did not disappoint the expectations raised of them on a nearer acquaintance; and the reason probably was what has been above hinted at, namely, that he did not take to this calling from nervous despondency and constitutional poverty of

spirit, but from the fulness and exuberance of his intellectual resources and animal spirits. Our satirist was not a mere wit, but a man of strong sense and observation, critical, argumentative, a good declaimer, and with a number of acquirements of various kinds. His poetry, instead of having absorbed all the little wit he had (which is so often the case), was but 'the sweepings of his mind.' He said just as good things every hour in the day. He was the life and soul of the company where he was—told a story admirably, gave his opinion freely, spoke equally well, and with thorough knowledge of poetry, painting, or music, could 'haloo an anthem' with stentorian lungs in imitation of the whole chorus of children at St. Paul's, or bring the black population of the West Indies before you like a swarm of flies in a sugar-basin, by his manner of describing their antics and odd noises. Dr. Wolcot's conversation was rich and powerful (not to say overpowering)—there was an extreme unction about it, but a certain tincture of grossness. His criticism was his best. We remember in particular his making an excellent analysis of Dryden's *Alexander's Feast* in a controversy on its merits with Mr. Curran; and as a specimen of his *parallelisms* between the sister-arts, he used to say of Viotti (the celebrated violin-player), that 'he was the Michael Angelo of the fiddle.' He had a heresy in painting, which was, that Claude Lorraine was inferior to Wilson; but the orthodox believers were obliged to be silent before him. A short time before his death he had a private lodging at Somers' Town, where he received a few friends. He sat and talked familiarly and cheerfully, asking you whether you thought his head would not make a fine bust? He had a decanter of rum placed on the table before him, from which he poured out a glass-full as he wanted it and drank it pure, taking no other beverage, but not exceeding in this. His infirmities had made no alteration in his conversation, except perhaps a little more timidity and hesitation; for blindness is the *lameness* of the mind. He could not see the effect of what he said lighting up the countenances of others; and in this case, the tongue may run on the faster, but hardly so well. After coffee, which he accompanied with the due quantity of *merum sal*, he would ask to be led down into a little parlour below, which was hung round with some early efforts of his own in landscape-painting, and with some of Wilson's unfinished sketches. Though he could see them no longer, otherwise than in his mind's eye, he was evidently pleased to be in the room with them, as they brought back former associations. Youth and age seem glad to meet as it were on the last hill-top of life, to shake hands once more and part for ever! He spoke slightingly of his own performances (though they were by no means contemptible), but launched out with great

fervour in praise of his favourite Wilson, and in disparagement of Claude, enlarging on the fine broad manner and bold effects of the one, and on the finical littleness of the other, and 'making the worse appear the better reason.' It was here we last parted with this fine old man, and it is with mixed pleasure and regret we turn to the subject. Peter Pindar, besides his vein of comic humour, excelled when he chose in the serious and pathetic; and his 'Lines to a Fly drowned in Treacle,' and 'To an Expiring Taper,' are among his best pieces.

## LOGIC

*The Atlas.*] [*April* 12, 1829.

Much has been said and written of the importance of logic to the advancement of truth and learning, but not altogether convincingly. Its use is chiefly confined by some to being a guide to the mind when first feeling its way out of the night of ignorance and barbarism, or a curb to the wilful and restive spirit that is a rebel to reason and common sense. But the extent of the benefit in either case may be doubted; since the rude and uninstructed will not submit to artificial trammels, or get up into this *go-cart* of the understanding, and the perverse and obstinate will jump out of it whenever their prejudices or passions are wound up to a height to make its restraints necessary. The wilful man will have his way in spite of the dictates of his reason or the evidence of his senses either. The study of logic has been compared to the getting ready and sharpening the tools with which the mind works out the truth; but all that is of value in it is more like the natural use of our hands, or resembles the mould in which truth must be cast, and which is born with us, rather than an external instrument with which it must be fashioned; for all syllogisms reduce themselves either to identical propositions, or to certain forms and relations of ideas in the understanding, which are antecedent to, and absolutely govern, our conclusions with the rules for drawing them. The mind cannot *make an instrument to make truth*, as it contrives an instrument to make a certain object; for in the latter case, the object depends upon the act and will of the mind; but in the former, the mind is passive to the impression of given objects upon it, and this depends on certain laws over which it has itself no control. Logic at best only lays down the rules and laws by which our reason operates; but it must operate according to those rules and laws equally whether they are adverted to or not, or they could not be laid down as infallible. Truth is, in a word, the shape which our

ideas take in the moulds of the understanding, just as the potter's clay derives its figure (whether round or square) from the mould in which it is cast. Thus, if we are told that one wine-glass is less than another, and that the larger wine-glass is less than a third, we know that the third wine-glass is larger than the first, without either comparing them or having any general rule to prove it by. We can no more conceive it otherwise, or do away that regular gradation and proportion between the objects so defined and characterised, than we can imagine the same thing to grow bigger and become less at the same time. Reasoning is allowed (at least by the schoolmen and the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge, though not by our wise sceptical moderns) to be the linking of one judgment on to two others: *this* and *that* being given, why then something else follows. Thus, suppose two roads to take a diverging direction, you are sure, without measuring, that the farther you go in the one, the farther you get from the other. You know that you advance: you *infer* that you recede. Now the difficulty lies here—if the premises are the same with the conclusion, it amounts only to an identical proposition: if they are different, what is the connection between them? But in the example just given, there are two circumstances, or properties, stated at the outset of the question, *viz.*—not merely the existence, but the direction, of the road; and to sustain the inference, all that seems necessary is, that both these circumstances should be borne in mind. For if the road do not continue to *diverge*, the conclusion will not hold good; and if it still continue to diverge, what is this but saying, not only that it advances, but that it advances in a direction which, by the supposition, carries it farther at every step from the former road? That is, two things are affirmed of a given object; the mind sets out with a complex proposition, and what it has to do is not to forget one-half of it by the way. It would be long enough before the abstract idea of a road would imply its distance from another; but it would also be hard if a diverging road—that is, a road that recedes while it advances—did not recede. A mathematical line and its direction are not two things, like the feet of a pair of compasses—that while the line is moving one way, the direction may be going astray in another—but mutually implied and inseparably connected together in nature or the understanding—let the *realists* or *idealists* determine which they please. Or, as the wise man said to the daughter of King Cophetua, 'That which is, is; for what is *that* but *that*, and *is* but *is*?'[1] The worst

[1] An identical proposition is not an inference; but all reasoning consists in inference, or in finding out one thing as implied in another. In comparing any two objects, I have nothing previously given and cannot predict the result; but having made the comparison, I have then something determined and fixed to go

of the matter is, that the most important conclusions are not to be so easily enclosed in pews and forms of words and definitions; and that to catch the truth as it flies, is as nice a point as hedging the cuckoo: though they say that its wings have been lately clipped and a pound built for it somewhere in Westminster. Not to proceed farther in this subject, and get 'over shoes, over boots' in the mire of metaphysics, we shall conclude this article with what we meant to state at the commencement of it, to wit—that the commonest form of the syllogism is the worst of all, being a downright fallacy and *petitio principii*. It consists in including the individual in the species, and runs thus: 'All men are mortal; John is a man; therefore John is mortal.' Let any one deny this at his peril; but what is, or can be gained by such parrotting? The first branch of the premises takes for granted and supposes that you already know all that you want to prove in the conclusion. For before you are entitled to assert roundly that all men are mortal, you must know this of John in particular, who is a man, which is the point you are labouring to establish; or, if you do not know this of every individual man, and of John among the rest, then you have no right to make such a sweeping general assertion, which falls to the ground of itself. Either the premises are hasty or false, and the conclusion rotten that way; or if they be sound, and proved as matter-of-fact to the extent which is pretended, then you have anticipated your conclusion, and your syllogism is pedantic and superfluous. In fact, this form of the syllogism is an unmeaning play upon words, or resolves itself into the merely probable or analogical argument, that because all other men *have died*, John, who is one of them, *will die* also. The inference relating to historical truth, and founded on the customary connection between cause and effect, is very different from logical proof, or the impossibility of conceiving of certain things otherwise than as inseparable. Suppose I see a row of pillars before me, and that I chuse to affirm—'Those hundred pillars

by; and what else I discover or imagine must be in conformity with this first knowledge. This coherence in propositions, or in the mind, is the force of *reason*, whereby one idea acts as the ground-work or cause of another. If I apply B as a common measure to A and C, and find it the same with both, it follows that they are equal to one another; since otherwise I must suppose the same thing (B) to be equal to unequal things, which is impossible as long as I retain my senses, or more properly, my recollection. I have ascertained two lines to be of the length of a third; that length cannot differ from itself; and therefore having settled what the two lines are with respect to the third, I cannot conceive them to be different with respect to one another, without forgetting myself, or what I know of them. If I had no power of contemplating different propositions together, I could draw no such conclusion; the conclusion therefore results from this comprehensive power of the mind; and reason is the end or band that ties the bundle of our separate ideas, or the logical *fasciculus* together.

are all of white marble; the pillar directly facing me is one of the hundred; therefore that pillar is also of white marble'—would not this be arrant trifling both with my own understanding and with that of any one who had patience to hear me? But if I were to see a number of pillars resembling each other in outward appearance, and on examining all of them but one, found them of white marble and concluded that that one was of white marble too, there would be some common sense in this, but no logic. The mind, however, has a natural bias to wrap up its conclusions (of whatever kind or degree) in regular forms of words, and to deposit them in an imposing framework of demonstration; it prefers the shadow of certainty to the substance of truth and candour; and will not, if it can help it, leave a single loop-hole for doubt to creep in at. Hence the tribe of logicians, dogmatists, and verbal pretenders of all sorts.

## THE LATE MR. CURRAN

*The Atlas.*] [*April* 26, 1829.

This celebrated wit and orator in his latter days was a little in the back-ground. He had lodgings at Brompton; and riding into town one day, and hearing two gentlemen in the Park disputing about Mathews's Curran, he said—'In faith, it 's the only Mr. Curran, that is ever talked of now-a-days.' He had some qualms about certain peccadillos of his past life, and wanted to make confessors of his friends. Certainly, a monastery is no unfit retreat for those who have been led away by the thoughtless vivacity of youth, and wish to keep up the excitement by turning the tables on themselves in age. The crime and the remorse are merely the alternations of the same passionate temperament. Mr. Curran had a flash of the eye, a musical intonation of voice, such as we have never known excelled. Mr. Mathews's imitation of him, though it had been much admired, does not come up to the original. Some of his bursts of forensic eloquence deserve to be immortal, such as that appalling expression applied to a hired spy and informer, that he 'had been buried as a man, and was dug up a witness.' A person like this might find language to describe the late *shots* at Edinburgh. Mr. Curran did not shine so much in Parliament; but he sometimes succeeded admirably in turning the laugh against his opponents. He compared the situation of government after they had brought over a member of Opposition to their side, and found the renegado of no use to them, to the story of the country-gentleman who bought Punch and complained of his turning out dull company. Some of

Mr. Curran's *bon-mots* and sallies of humour were first-rate. He sometimes indulged in poetry, in which he did not excel. His taste in it was but indifferent. He neither liked *Paradise Lost* nor *Romeo and Juliet*. He had an ear for music, and both played and sung his native ballads delightfully. He contended that the English had no national music. He was an enthusiastic admirer of Mrs. Siddons. He said of John Kemble, that, 'he had an eye rather to *look at* than to *look with*.' His great passion was a love of English literature and the society of literary men. He occasionally found his account in it. Being one day in a group of philosophers, and the invention of fire being spoken of, one of the party suggested that it was from seeing a horse's shoe strike fire; 'and I suppose,' said Curran triumphantly, 'the horse-shoe was afterwards made with that fire.'

## THE COURT JOURNAL—A DIALOGUE

*The Atlas.*] [*June 7*, 1829.

*M.*—Have you seen the *Court Journal*?

*G.*—No: I only read some 'Maxims on Love,' which I seemed to have met with in some pre-existent work.

*M.*—Then you may tell C— from me it will not last three months. People of fashion do not want to read accounts of themselves, written by those who know nothing of the matter. This eternal babble about high life is an affront to every one else, and an impertinence with respect to those whom it is stupidly meant to flatter. What do those care about tiresome descriptions of satin ottomans and ormolu carvings, who are sick of seeing them from morning till night? No! they would rather read an account of Donald Bean Lean's Highland cave, strewed with rushes, or a relation of a *row* in a night-cellar in St. Giles's. What they and all mankind want, is to vary the monotonous round of their existence; to go out of themselves as much as possible; and not to have their own oppressive and idle pretensions served up to them again in a hash of mawkish affectation. They read *Cobbett*—it is like an electrical shock to them, or a plunge in a cold-bath: it braces while it jars their enervated fibres. He is a sturdy, blunt yeoman: the other is a foppish footman, dressed up in cast-off finery. Or if Lord L—— is delighted with a description (not well-done) of his own house and furniture, do you suppose that Lord H——, who is his rival in gewgaws and upholstery, will not be equally uneasy at it? As to the vulgar, what they like is to see fine sights and not to hear of them. They like to get inside a fine house, to see fine

things and touch them if they dare, and not to be tantalized with a vapid inventory, which does not gratify their senses, and mortifies their pride and sense of privation. The exaggerated admiration only makes the exclusion more painful: it is like a staring sign to a show which one has not money in one's pocket to pay for seeing. Mere furniture or private property can never be a subject to interest the public: the possessor is entitled to the sole benefit of it. If there were an account in the newspaper that all this finery was burnt to ashes, then all the world would be eager to read it, saying all the time how sorry they were, and what a shocking thing it was.

*G.*—Servants and country-people always turn to the accidents and offences in a newspaper.

*M.*—And their masters and mistresses too. Did you never read the *Newgate Calendar*?

*G.*—Yes.

*M.*—Well, that is not *genteel*. This is what renders the *Beggar's Opera* so delightful; you despise the actors in the scene, and yet the wit galls and brings down their *betters* from their airy flight with all their borrowed plumage, so that we are put absolutely at our ease for the time with respect to our own darling pretensions. G—— was here the other evening; he said he thought the *Beggar's Opera* came after Shakspeare. I wonder who put that in his head; it was hardly his own discovery.

*G.*—It seems neither Lord Byron nor Burke liked the *Beggar's Opera*.

*M.*—They were the losers by that opinion: but how do you account for it?

*G.*—Lord Byron was a *radical* peer, Burke an upstart plebeian; neither of them felt quite secure in the *niche* where they had stationed themselves from the random-shots that were flying on the stage. They could not say with *Hamlet*, 'Our withers are unwrung.' As to Lord Byron, he might not relish the point of *Mrs. Peachum's* speech, 'Married a highwayman! Why, hussey, you will be as ill-treated and as much neglected as if you had married a lord!' Did you ever hear the story of Miss ——, when she was quite a girl, going to see Mrs. Siddons in the *Fatal Marriage*, and being taken out fainting into the lobby, and calling out, 'Oh *Biron, Biron*!'—'Egad!' said the cool narrator of the story, 'she has had enough of Byron since!' With regard to Burke, there was a rotten core, a Serbonian bog in his understanding, in which not only Gay's master-piece but the whole of what modern literature, wit, and reason had done for the world, sunk and was swallowed up in a fetid abyss for ever! But I am sorry you think no better of the *Court Journal*. I was in hopes

it might succeed, as a very old friend of mine has something to do with it.

*M.*—Oh! but mischief must be put a stop to. This is the most nauseous *toad-eating*, and it is as awkwardly done as it is ill-meant. There is a fulsome pretence set up in one paper that rank consists in birth and blood. It is at once to neutralise all the present race of fashion. The civil wars of York and Lancaster put an end to almost all the old nobility—there are none of the Plantagenets left now. Those who go to court think themselves lucky if they can trace as far back as the Nell Gwynns and Duchess of Clevelands in Charles the Second's days. Besides, all this prejudice about nobility and ancestry should be understood and worshipped in silence and at a distance, not thrown in the teeth of such people, as if they had nothing else to boast of. They should be told of perfections which they have not, as you praise a wit for her beauty and a fool for her wit. Your friend should read *Count Grammont* to learn how to flatter and cajole. Does not Mr. C—— know enough from experience of the desire of lords and ladies to turn authors, and shine, not in a ballroom, but on *his* counter?

*G.*—He expects the K—— to write; nay, it was with difficulty he was dissuaded from offering a round sum.

*M.*—How much, pray?

*G.*—Five thousand guineas for half a page.

*M.*—It would not sell a single copy. People would think it was a hoax and would not buy it. Those who believed it would not read it. Oh! there is a letter of Louis XVIII. in a late number, on the death of some lady he was attached to: it is prettily done, but it is such good English, that I suspect it can hardly be a translation or an original. If they could procure curious documents of this kind, and had a magazine of the secrets, anecdotes, and correspondence of people of high rank, undoubtedly it would answer; but this would be another edition of the *Jockey Club*, and very different from its present insipidity. Even children will not be crammed with honey.

*G.*—I understand there is to be no scandal. All the great are to be supposed to be elegantly good, and to wear virtue with a grace peculiar to people of fashion.

*M.*—That will at any rate be new. And then I see there are criticisms on pictures: the writer is thrown into raptures with the portraits of Lord and Lady Castlereagh. And this is followed by a drawling, pitiable account of two little Corregios, as if they were miracles and had descended from heaven—the 'Madonna' and 'Mercury teaching Cupid to read.' They are well enough, though Sir Joshua has done the same thing better. But higher praise could not

be lavished on the 'St. Jerome' or the 'Night at Dresden,' or the 'Ceiling at Parma,' which is his best, though it has fallen into decay.

*G.*—Collectors think one Corregio just as good as another; and it is to meet this feeling, probably, that the article is written.

## THE LATE DR. PRIESTLEY

*The Atlas.*] [*June* 14, 1829.

The epithet of *the late* could not be applied to this celebrated character in the sense in which it has been turned upon some *late* wits and dinner-hunters as never being in time; if he had a fault, it was that of being precipitate and premature, of sitting down to the banquet which he had prepared for others before it was half-done; of seeing things with too quick and hasty a glance, of finding them in embryo, and leaving them too often in an unfinished state. This turn of his intellect had to do with his natural temper—he was impatient, somewhat peevish and irritable in little things, though not from violence or acerbity, but from seeing what was proper to be done quicker than others, and not liking to wait for an absurdity. On great and trying occasions, he was calm and resigned, having been schooled by the lessons of religion and philosophy, or, perhaps, from being, as it were, taken by surprise, and never having been accustomed to the indulgence of strong passions or violent emotions. His frame was light, fragile, neither strong nor elegant; and in going to any place, he walked on before his wife (who was a tall, powerful woman) with a primitive simplicity, or as if a certain restlessness and hurry impelled him on with a projectile force before others. His personal appearance was altogether singular and characteristic. It belonged to the class which may be called *scholastic*. His feet seemed to have been entangled in a gown, his features to have been set in a wig or taken out of a mould. There was nothing to induce you to say with the poet, that 'his body thought'; it was merely the envelop of his mind. In his face there was a strange mixture of acuteness and obtuseness; the nose was sharp and turned up, yet rounded at the end, a keen glance, a quivering lip, yet the aspect placid and indifferent, without any of that expression which arises either from the close workings of the passions or an intercourse with the world. You discovered the prim, formal look of the Dissenter—none of the haughtiness of the churchman nor the wildness of the visionary. He was, in fact, always the student in his closet, moved in or out, as it happened, with no perceptible variation:

he sat at his breakfast with a folio volume before him on one side and a note-book on the other; and if a question were asked him, answered it like an absent man. He stammered, spoke thick, and huddled his words ungracefully together. To him the whole business of life consisted in *reading and writing*; and the ordinary concerns of this world were considered as a frivolous or mechanical interruption to the more important interests of science and of a future state. Dr. Priestley might, in external appearance, have passed for a French priest, or the lay-brother of a convent: in literature, he was the Voltaire of the Unitarians. He did not, like Mr. Southey, to be sure (who has been denominated the English Voltaire,) vary from prose to poetry, or from one side of a question to another; but he took in a vast range of subjects of very opposite characters, treated them all with the same acuteness, spirit, facility, and perspicuity, and notwithstanding the intricacy and novelty of many of his speculations, it may be safely asserted that there is not an obscure sentence in all he wrote. *Those who run may read.* He wrote on history, grammar, law, politics, divinity, metaphysics, and natural philosophy—and those who perused his works fancied themselves entirely, and were in a great measure, masters of all these subjects. He was one of the very few who could make abstruse questions popular; and in this respect he was on a par with Paley with twenty times his discursiveness and subtlety. Paley's loose casuistry, which is his strong-hold and chief attraction, he got (every word of it) from Abraham Tucker's *Light of Nature.* A man may write fluently on a number of topics with the same pen, and that pen a very blunt one; but this was not Dr. Priestley's case; the studies to which he devoted himself with so much success and *eclat* required different and almost incompatible faculties. What for instance can be more distinct or more rarely combined than metaphysical refinement and a talent for experimental philosophy? The one picks up the grains, the other spins the threads of thought. Yet Dr. Priestley was certainly the best controversialist of his day, and one of the best in the language; and his chemical experiments (so curious a variety in a dissenting minister's pursuits) laid the foundation and often nearly completed the superstructure of most of the modern discoveries in that science. This is candidly and gratefully acknowledged by the French chemists, however the *odium theologicum* may slur over the obligation in this country, or certain fashionable lecturers may avoid the repetition of startling names. Priestley's *Controversy with Dr. Price* is a masterpiece not only of ingenuity, vigour, and logical clearness, but of verbal dexterity and artful evasion of difficulties, if any one need a model of this kind. His antagonist stood no chance with him in 'the dazzling

fence of argument,' and yet Dr. Price was no mean man. We should like to have seen a tilting-bout on some point of scholastic divinity between the little Presbyterian parson and the great Goliath of modern Calvinism, Mr. Irving; he would have had his huge Caledonian boar-spear, his Patagonian club out of his hands in a twinkling with his sharp Unitarian foil. The blear-eyed demon of vulgar dogmatism and intolerance would have taken his revenge by gnashing his teeth, rolling his eyes in a resistless phrensy, and denouncing as out of the pale of Christian charity a man who placed his chief comfort in this life in his hope of the next, and who would have walked firmly and cheerfully to a stake in the fulness of his belief of the Christian revelation. Out upon these pulpit demigorgons, 'Anthropagi and men who eat each other,' to gratify the canine malice and inward gnawing of their morbid understandings, and worse than the infuriated savage, not contented to kill the body, would 'cast both body and soul into hell;' and unless they can see from their crazy thrones of spiritual pride and mountebank effrontery, the whole world cowering like one outstretched congregation in a level sea of bare heads and upturned wondering looks at their feet, prone and passive, and aghast under the thunders of their voice, the flashes of their eye—would snatch Heaven's own bolt to convert the solid globe into a sea of fire to torture millions of their fellow-creatures in for the slightest difference of opinion from them, or dissent from the authority of a poor, writhing, agonised reptile, who works himself up in imagination by raving and blasphemy into a sort of fourth person in the Trinity, and would avenge his mortified ambition, his moonstruck-madness, and ebbing popularity as the wrongs of the Most High!—'Nay, an you mouth, we'll rant as well as you!'—To return to Dr. Priestley and common sense, if it be possible to get down these from the height of *melo-dramatic* and apocalyptic orthodoxy. We do not place the subject of this notice in the first class of metaphysical reasoners either for originality or candour: but in boldness of inquiry, quickness, and elasticity of mind, and ease in making himself understood, he had no superior. He had wit too, though this was a resource to which he resorted only in extreme cases. Mr. Coleridge once threw a respectable dissenting congregation into an unwonted forgetfulness of their gravity, by reciting a description, from the pen of the transatlantic fugitive, of the manner in which the first man might set about making himself, according to the doctrine of the Atheists. Mr. Coleridge put no marks of quotation either before or after the passage, which was extremely grotesque and ludicrous; but imbibed the whole of the applause it met with in his flickering smiles and oily countenance. Dr. Priestley's latter years

were unhappily embittered by his unavailing appeals to the French philosophers in behalf of the Christian religion; and also by domestic misfortunes, to which none but a Cobbett could have alluded in terms of triumph. We see no end to the rascality of human nature; all that there is good in it is the constant butt of the base and brutal.

## SECTS AND PARTIES

*The Atlas.*] [*August* 2, 1829.

We from our souls sincerely hate all cabals and *coteries*; and this is our chief objection to sects and parties. People who set up to judge for themselves on every question that comes before them, and quarrel with received opinions and established usages, find so little sympathy from the rest of the world that they are glad to get any one to agree with them, and with that proviso the poorest creature becomes their *Magnus Apollo*. The mind sets out indeed in search of truth and on a principle of independent inquiry; but is so little able to do without leaning on someone else for encouragement and support, that we presently see those who have separated themselves from the mere mob, and the great masses of prejudice and opinion, forming into little groups of their own and appealing to one another's approbation, as if they had secured a monopoly of common sense and reason. Wherever two or three of this sort are gathered together, there is self-conceit in the midst of them. 'You grant me judgment, and I grant you wit'—is the key-note from which an admirable duett, trio, or quartett of the understanding may be struck up at any time to the entire satisfaction of the parties concerned, though the bye-standers may be laughing at or execrating the unwelcome discord. The principle of all reform is this, that there is a tendency to dogmatism, to credulity and intolerance in the human mind itself, as well as in certain systems of bigotry or superstition; and until reformers are themselves aware of, and guard carefully against, the natural infirmity which besets them in common with all others, they must necessarily run into the error which they cry out against. Without this self-knowledge and circumspection, though the great wheel of vulgar prejudice and traditional authority may be stopped or slackened in its course, we shall only have a number of small ones of petulance, contradiction, and partisanship set a-going to our frequent and daily annoyance in its place: or (to vary the figure) instead of crowding into a common stage-coach or hum-drum vehicle of opinion to arrive at a conclusion, every man will be for mounting his own *velocipede*, run up against his neighbours, and exhaust his breath and agitate his

limbs in vain. In Mr. Bentham's *Book of Fallacies* we apprehend are not to be found the crying sins of singularity, rash judgment, and self-applause. What boots it, we might ask, to get rid of tests and subscription to thirty-nine articles of orthodox belief, if, in lieu of this wholesale and comprehensive mode of exercising authority over our fellows, a DOGMA is placed upon the table at breakfast time, sits down with us to dinner, or is laid on our pillow at night, rigidly prescribing what we are to eat, drink, and how many hours we are to sleep? Or be it that the authority of Aristotle and the school-men is gone by, what shall the humble and serious inquirer after truth profit by it, if he still cannot say that his soul is his own for the sublime dulness of Mr. Maculloch, and the Dunciad of political economists? The imprimatur of the Star-Chamber, the *cum privilegio regis* is taken off from printed books—what does the freedom of the press or liberality of sentiment gain, if a board of *Utility* at Charing-cross must affix its stamp, before a jest can find its way into a newspaper, or must knock a flower of speech on the head with the sledge-hammer of cynical reform? The cloven-foot, the over-weening, impatient, exclusive spirit breaks out in different ways, in different times and circumstances. While men are quite ignorant and in the dark, they trust to others, and force you to do so under pain of fire and faggot: —when they have learned a little they think they know every thing, and would compel you to comform to that opinion, under pain of their impertinence, maledictions, and sarcasms, which are the modern rack and thumb-screw. The mode of torture, it must be confessed, is refined, though the intention is the same. Their ill-temper and want of toleration fall the hardest on their own side, for those who adhere to fashion and power care no more about their good or ill word, than about the short, unmelodious gruntings of any other sordid stye. But how is any poor devil who has got into their clutches to shelter himself from their malevolence and party-spite? Why, by enlisting under their banners, swearing to all that they say, and going all lengths with them. Otherwise, he is a *black sheep* in the flock, and made a butt of by the rest. This is a self-evident process. For the fewer people any sect or party have to sympathise with them, the more entire must that sympathy be: it must be without flaw or blemish, as a set-off to the numbers on the other side; and they who set up to be wiser than all the world put together, cannot afford to acknowledge themselves wrong in any particular. You must, therefore, agree to all their sense or nonsense, allow them to be judges equally of what they do or do not understand, adopt their cant, repeat their jargon, have no notions but what they have, caricature their absurdities, make yourself obnoxious for their satisfaction, and a slave

and lacquey to their opinions, humours, and convenience; or they black-ball you, send you to Coventry, and play the devil with you. Thus, for any writer in a highly enlightened and liberal morning paper, not merely to question the grand arcanum of population or the doctrine of rent, would be both great and petty treason; but it would be as much as his *place* was worth, to suggest a hint that Mrs. Chatterley is not a fine woman and a charming actress. Fanatics and innovators formerly appealed in support of their dreams and extravagancies to inspiration and an inward light; the modern race of philosophical projectors, not having this resource, are obliged to fortify themselves in a double crust of confidence in themselves, and contempt for their predecessors and contemporaries. It is easy to suppose what a very repulsive sort of people they must be! Indeed, to remedy what was thought a hard exterior and an intolerable air of assumption on the part of the professors of the new school, a machine, it is said, has been completed in Mr. Bentham's garden in Westminster, which turns out a very useful invention of jurisprudence, morals, logic, political economy, constitutions, and codifications, as infallibly and with as little variation as a barrel-organ plays 'God save the King,' or 'Rule Britannia':—nay, so well does it work and so little trouble or attendance does it require from the adepts, that the latter mean to sign a truce with gravity and 'wise saws,' some of them having entered at the bar, others being about to take orders in the church, others having got places in the India-house, and all being disposed to let the Bentham-machine shift for itself! *Omne tulit punctum qui miscuit utile dulci*:—Mr. Bentham is old, and doubtless has made his will! Reformers will hardly see themselves in religious schismatics and sectarians, whom they despise. Perhaps others may be struck with the likeness. *Rational dissenters*, for example, think, because they alone profess the title, they alone possess the thing. All rational dissenters are with them wise and good. An Unitarian is another name for sense and honesty; and must it not be so, when to those of an opposite faith it is a name of enmity and reproach? But the intolerance on one side, though it accounts for, does not disprove the weakness on the other. We have heard of devotees who employ a *serious* baker, a *serious* tailor, a *serious* cobbler, etc. So there are staunch reformists who would prefer a *radical* compositor, a *radical* stationer or bookbinder, to all others; and think little of those on their side of the question who, besides adhering to a principle, have not, in their over-zeal and contempt for their adversaries, contrived to render it offensive or ridiculous. A sound practical consistency does not satisfy the wilful restlessness of the advocates of change. They must have the piquancy of startling paradoxes, the pruriency of

romantic and ticklish situations, the pomp of itinerant professors of patriotism and *placarders* of their own *lives, travels, and opinions*. Why must a man stand up in a three-cornered hat and canonicals to bear testimony against the Christian religion, and in favour of reform? We hate all such impertinent masquerading and *double entendre*. Those who are accustomed to judge for themselves, and express their convictions at some risk and loss, are too apt to come from thinking that opinions may be right, *though* they are singular, to conclude that they are right, *because* they are singular. The more they differ from the world, the more convinced they are, because it flatters their self-love; and they are only quite satisfied and at their ease when they shock and disgust every one around them. They no longer consider the connexion between the conclusion and the premises, but between any idle hypothesis and their personal vanity. They cling obstinately to opinions, as they have been hastily formed; and patronize every whim that they fancy is their own. They are most confident of 'what they are least assured;' and will stake all they are worth on the *forlorn hope* of their own imaginary sagacity and clearness. An *idiosyncrasy* steals into every thing; *their* way is best. Always regarding the world at large as an old dotard, they think any single individual in it quite beneath their notice—unless it is an *alter idem* of the select *coterie*—neither consult you about their affairs, nor deign you an answer on your own, and have a model of perfection in their minds to which they refer all public and private transactions. There are *methodists* in business as well as in religion, who have a peculiar happy knack in folding a letter, or in saying *How d'ye do*, who postpone the main object to some pragmatical theory or foppish punctilio, and who might take for their motto—*all for conceit or the world well lost*.

## CONVERSATIONS AS GOOD AS REAL (1)

*The Atlas.*] [*September* 20, 1829.

*T.*—Windham was very intimate with Gilray afterwards—or perhaps before; for he also had been on both sides.

*J.*—What I object to in Hogarth is, that he was not accomplished enough even for the task he undertook. An instance occurred the other day. A servant-girl had been decoyed from her situation, and on complaint being made before the magistrate, the officers traced her to Duke's-place, and brought her back to her friends in Wardour-Street. She was dressed up quite in the height of the fashion; and every one that went to see her, came away astonished at her perfect

beauty. Could Hogarth have painted this? Yet here was a scene quite in his way. He selects what is bad in St. Giles's, not what is best in nature. That old Mother W—— lives for ever. It was she who decoyed away Emily Coventry that sat to Sir Joshua for his *Thais*. She was a chimney-sweeper's daughter, or something of that kind; but she was a vast beauty, and Mother W—— found her out in spite of her rags and dirt. She had a hawk's eye for anything of this sort. I sat facing her once in an upper box at the Opera. I never saw such an expression—her look went through you.

*T.*—But I suppose you looked at her again.

*J.*—Fielding has tried to describe *Sophia* as a beauty, but makes a wretched hand of it. He says first she was a beauty; and then to let you know what sort of a beauty she was, that she was like the *Venus of Medici*; then that her nose inclined to be Roman, which the *Venus de Medici's* does not; then that she resembled Kneller's portrait of Lady Ranelagh, which is like neither. The truth is, he did not know what she was like; nor that he could not in words give a description of beauty, which is the painter's province.

*T.*—Coleridge used to remark that description was the vice of poetry, and allegory of painting.

*J.*—Nothing can be better said. Since you told me that remark of his about *Paul and Virginia*, he has risen vastly in my estimation. Again, why does the correspondent in the Atlas take me up short for saying that 'we laugh at a person who is rolled in the gutter?' He observes on this, 'if it is an accident, the laughter is silly, and not a case in point; if inflicted as a punishment for some petty injustice, we do not laugh, but rub our hands.' So that we are to laugh in neither case. Is the ridicule merited where the cobbler, in the 'Election Dinner,' has smutted the face of his next neighbour? Or does the cobbler laugh the less, or will he not laugh on for ever, on this account? Has not Hogarth immortalised this piece of silliness in this disgraceful scene? Who will set limits (by the author's *crambo*) to the length to which he lolls out his tongue, or to the portentous rolling of his eyes in a squint of ecstasy? Is the sly leer and drooping of the widow's eyelids, or the position of the parson's hands in the 'Harlot's Funeral,' drawing as well as character and invention? Or is the fighting of the dog and the man for the bone on a perfect footing of equality (to show that hunger levels all distinctions), or the mother letting the child fall over the wall in the 'Gin-lane,' or the girl in the 'Noon,' 'with her pie-dish tottering like her virtue, and the contents running over,' (as I have seen it somewhere expressed,) an example of skill in drawing? It is easy to paint a face without a nose, or with a wry one; the difficulty is to make it

straight. Few persons can draw a circle; any one may draw a crooked line.

*T.*—But has not Hogarth hit off the exact character and expression; and is not that a proof of the painter's hand and eye?

*J.*—It may be so; but you cannot be sure of it. The correspondent of the paper laughs at the idea of Hogarth's coming under the article of writing. He *has* come under the article of writing. Does not the critic speak of his 'immortal tales?' Does Mr. Lamb expatiate on the drawing, colour, and effects of light and shade, or only on the moral and story? He has left out one half of the language of painting in the prints; and they are the better for it. Nor do I see what objection there is to the comparison of Hogarth to buffoons on the stage. For my part, I think Liston comes much nearer to Hogarth than Emery's *Tyke*; and I am sure his *Lord Grizzle* is just as good *in its way* as anything can possibly be. Why then does the critic scout the comparison? Because it would be ridiculous to say, that Liston's *Lord Grizzle* is as fine as Mrs. Siddons's *Lady Macbeth*; that both fulfilled their parts equally, and that neither could do more without infringing on the integrity of their characters. Yet if the dignity of the subject is to be left out of the question, Liston may be put into the scale with Mrs. Siddons just as well as Emery; but if not, then neither one nor the other can. Any one for me may say he likes *Punch and the puppet-show* as well as the finest tragedy—I should think it honest and natural enough—but I hate putting up at a half-way house between farce and tragedy, and pretending that there is no difference in the case. Persons who have no taste for, but an aversion to whatever is great and elevated, are ashamed openly to patronise farce, lest they should be laughed at; and they, therefore, get something intermediate between that and tragedy, and set it up as the finest thing in the world, to escape ridicule and satisfy their own perverse inclination. It is necessary to set one's face against such vulgar critics; for, like other vulgar people, if you do not keep them quite out, they will constantly encroach and turn you out of your most settled convictions with their mongrel theories.

*T.*—What is the aim of all high tragedy? It is to resolve the sense of pain or suffering into the sense of *power* by the aid of imagination, and by grandeur of conception and character. What is the object of Hogarth's tragicomedy? To reverse this order: that is, he gives us the extremest distress in the most revolting circumstances and in connection with the most unfeeling and weakest characters, so as either to produce the utmost disgust or excite as little sympathy as possible. Why must maternal affection be displayed, and, as it were,

outraged in the strength of attachment to a most brutish and worthless moon-calf of a son? The moral may be strictly true, but the mode of conveying it is no less a penance. Why must the feeling of love be exemplified in the persevering attachment of the victim of seduction to her profligate and contemptible seducer? This is essential to Hogarth's conception of passion, that it should be at variance with its object, incongruous, and bordering on the absurd and ludicrous. Why must a fine feeling or sentiment be dragged through the kennel or stuck in the pillory before it can be tolerated in his graphic designs? There is neither unity nor grandeur. Mr. Lamb admires the expression of the losing gamester in the 'Rake's Progress:' it is exactly what Liston would give in attempting such a part, and not unlike him. Why show the extreme of passion in faces unsusceptible of it, or kill the sympathy by the meanness and poverty of the associations? Mr. Lamb despises Kean's face in *Othello*: I prefer it to any of Hogarth's tragic faces, which are generally of the mock-heroic class.[1] The Methodist preacher in the cart with the *Idle Apprentice* is another *Mawworm*, a fantastic figure, tossed about by the wind or the spirit, though the conception would be fine for a novel or *written* story: the apprentice himself is a scare-crow, the sport of the mob, with whose indifference you take part, not with the sufferings of the hero, if he is supposed to have any. The whole is a game at tragic cross-purposes. The sublimity (such as it is) rests on a foundation of the squalid and scurrilous. The incongruous was Hogarth's element, and he could not get out of his own or (what is I fear) the national character, which delights in laughing at and exulting over the defects and mishaps of others, not from any concern for them, but as a foil to its own discontented humour and conscious want of higher resources. Defoe, who was in the same age and class, had more imagination. His *Robinson Crusoe* is in perfect keeping. He is not solitary, but solitude: from being shut out from the world, he fills the universe with himself, and his being expands to the circumference of the ocean and sky. Hogarth would have shut him up in a work-house or a gaol, with boys hooting at him through the bars, and no escape left on the wings of the imagination or the strength of will. This may be very intense, but it is not to my taste. A disciple of this school should not go to see Madame *Pasta* act. He would like Madame *Pesaroni* better, for she is ugly, squat, and her voice is masculine and loud. The other, who is all harmony, would oppress and make him uneasy for want of some salvo to his

[1] This is the reason that low comedians generally come out in tragedy—they do not perceive the difference between the serious and the burlesque.

self-love. Would a critic of this order like to see a tragic actress with a wooden leg? For this is Hogarth. Mr. Lamb admires *Moll Flanders*; would he marry *Moll Flanders*? There ought to be something in common in our regard for the original and the copy. A taste for the odd and eccentric eats like a canker into the mind; and if not checked, drives out all relish for the noble and consistent as stiff and pedantic. The drollery is certainly less; and if there is not some set-off in earnestness and dignity, the serious must be at a low ebb indeed, and *Hudibras* is finer than *Paradise Lost*. It would be a proof of bad taste to like to look at a mean or ill-formed face, for the sake of laughing at it, rather than at a fine one. And so in art: the representation of brutality, coarseness, and want of capacity and feeling is surely less desirable than the representation of the opposite qualities; or it is saying that you laugh at and despise a thing for falling short of a certain excellence and perfection, and when it gains that excellence and perfection, it is no better than it was before.

*J.*—You remember the drawing I showed you by Lane, after the 'Possessed Boy' of Domenichino? There was there infinite sensibility, infinite delicacy, agony with sweetness, beauty in the midst of distortion. You saw there that every fine feeling had passed through the painter's mind, or he could not have expressed them; you were made to sympathise with them, and to understand and revere them as a part of your own nature. Compared with works like this, which are the pure mirrors of truth and beauty, Hogarth's subjects are the very 'measles' of art—the scum and offal—it is like going a voyage in a convict-ship, with an alternation of the same humours and the same horrors—it is a bad prospect for life.

*T.*—There is some limit. The late Edinburgh murders would not bear being transferred to the canvass, though the group at Ambrose's would make a subject for a sketch, so nice are the distinctions of taste.

*J.*—The comic sets off the serious by contrast, and is a necessary relief; but how little a way does the sense of defect go towards a conception of, or power to embody the reverse! Look at Hogarth's attempts at dignified subjects, and see how poor and feeble they are. His 'Pool of Bethesda' is pitiable; but in the burlesque composition, where he introduces the devil cutting away the leg of the stool on which St. Paul is preaching, he is himself again, and worthy of all imitation. The critic in the Atlas asks what I mean by originality, as if I thought it independent of any prototypes in nature? No, originality consists in seeing nature for yourself; but it does not follow that everyone can do this or is to see nature alike, or there would be nothing remarkable in it.

*T.*—Crabbe is an original writer; but it is to be hoped he will have few followers. Mr. Lamb, by softening the disagreeableness of one of his tales, has taken out the sting.

*J.*—Hogarth is an exception to general rules; I said so before. He is the only great comic painter; and he is so for this reason—that painting is not the mother-tongue of comedy. Would not this be allowed of sculpture? I have not seen the 'Tam O'Shanter'; but some Scotch critics are already, I hear, for exploding the *antique*. Painting is a dry, plodding art; a bottle-nose, if you come to examine it closely, becomes a very dull affair. We *talk* of a hump-back or a sore leg, which is enough of a good thing; the painter is obliged to give them entire, which is too much. Neither can he carry off this grossness by brilliancy of illustration, or rapidity of narrative. The eye and the mind take in a group or a succession of incidents in an instant; the hand follows lamely and slowly after, and naturally loses, in the mechanical details of each object, the surprise, odd starts, and contrasts, which are the life of comedy. Hogarth alone, by his double allusions, and by his giving motion (which is time) overcame this difficulty, or painted as if he were no painter, but set down each figure by a stroke of the pencil, or in a kind of *short-hand* of the art, being obliged to run neither into caricature nor still-life. This extreme facility or tenaciousness (amounting to a two-fold language) was his peculiar *forte*, and that in which he was, and will remain, unrivalled. Ducrow acts romances on horse-back; but it is not the best way of acting them; and few will imitate him without breaking their necks.

*T.*—Do not the same remarks apply in some measure to painting history?

*J.*—In some measure, they do; and therefore grand and dignified subjects are in general to be preferred to the more violent and distressing ones. Therefore Titian's portraits are on a par with history. You who admire Titian, how you must look at Hogarth! You see they avoid the sight of blood even on the stage. In short, it is a question, whether low and disagreeable subjects are fit to be painted; and Sir Joshua, among others, did not much approve of them. It is *not* a question whether grace and grandeur are fit subjects for painting—this alone settles the preference, and is some excuse for the author of the *Discourses* in perhaps making it a little too exclusive. If it were true that Hogarth is universal, or contains the highest kind of excellence, no one would dispute about him. After all, a *hurdygurdy* is neither a lute nor an organ.

## CONVERSATIONS AS GOOD AS REAL (2)

*The Atlas.*] [*November* 1, 1829.

*T.*—Was I not right in stating it to be an error to suppose that character is one thing, and to be judged of from a single circumstance? The simplicity of language constantly runs us into false abstractions. We call a man by one name, and forget the heap of contradictions of which he is composed. An acquaintance was wondering not long ago, how a man of sense that he mentioned could be guilty of such absurdities in practice. I answered that a man's understanding often had no more influence over his will than if they belonged to two different persons; nor frequently so much, since we sometimes consented to be governed by advice, though we could not controul our passions if left to ourselves.

*J.*—That is very true; but I do not see why you should express so much eagerness about it, as if your life depended on it.

*T.*—Nor I neither: I was not aware that I did so.

*J.*—You lay too much stress on these speculative opinions and abstruse distinctions. You fancy it is the love of truth: it is quite as much the pride of understanding. Are you as ready to be convinced yourself as you are bent on convincing others? You and those like you pretend to benefit mankind by discovering something new; but you can find out nothing that has not been invented and forgotten a hundred times. The world turns round just the same, in spite of the chirping of all the grasshoppers or squabbles of all the philosophers upon it. I told G. so the other day, who did not much like it—I said he gave a power of *creation* to the human mind, which did not belong to it. Even Shakspeare, who was so original and saw so deeply into the springs of nature, created nothing: he only brought forward what existed before. I said, 'You may observe and combine, but you can add nothing—neither a colour to the rainbow, nor a note to music, nor a faculty to the mind. And it 's well that you cannot; for my belief is, that if you could create the smallest thing, the world would not last three months, so little are you to be trusted with power.' G. retorted by a charge of misanthropy; and I asked him who were those dignifiers of the species to whom he wished me to look up with so much awe and reverence. He answered, somewhat to my surprise, Burke, Fox, and Sheridan. I expected he would have named Lord Bacon, or some of those. I was not much staggered by his authorities.

*T.*—I did not know G. was so parliamentary: he might, while he was about it, have mentioned the three last speakers of the

House of Commons, Lord Colchester, Lord Sidmouth, and Mr. Onslow.

*J.*—He should have gone farther off: it is distance that hides defects and magnifies. So it is with that prejudice of classical learning. You lock up names in an obsolete language, and they become sacred. I do not wish to speak against a classical education; it refines and softens, I grant; and I see the want of it in Cobbett, and others, who may be regarded as upstarts in letters. But surely it often gives a false estimate of men and things. Every one brought up in colleges, and drugged with Latin and Greek for a number of years, firmly believes *that there have been about five people in the world, and that they are dead.* All that actually exists, he holds to be nothing. The world about him is a phantasmagoria: he considers it a personal affront that any one should have common sense, or be able to find his way along the street, without looking for it in Plato or Aristotle. The classical standard turns shadows into realities and realities into shadows. A man of sense is trying to get the better of this early prejudice all his life; and hardly succeeds, after infinite mortification, at last. The dunces and pedants are the best off; they never suspect that there is any wisdom in the world but that of the ancients, of which they are the depositaries.

*T.*—I do not think G. goes that length; but he only exists in his passion for books and for literary fame. You cannot shock him more than by questioning any established reputation.

*J.*—Yes, he conceives himself to be a free-thinker, and yet is a bigot in his way.

*T.*—Men will have some idol, some mythology of their own—the *dii majores* or *minores*—something that they think greater than themselves, or that they would wish to resemble; and G. would be as angry at a sceptic on the subject of Burke's style, as a Catholic would be at a heretic who denied the virtues and miracles of his patron saint.

## TRIFLES LIGHT AS AIR

*The Atlas*] [*September 27 and October 4, 1829.*

I. There is no flattery so gross or extravagant but it will be acceptable. It leaves some sting of pleasure behind, since its very excess seems to imply that there must be some foundation for it. Tell the ugliest person in the world that he is the handsomest, the greatest fool that he is a wit, and he will believe and thank you. There is a possibility at least that you may be sincere. Even the sycophant's

ironical laugh turns to a smile of self-complacency at our own fancied perfections.

II. There is no abuse so foul or unprovoked but some part of it will *stick*. Ill words break the charm of good deeds. Call a man names all the year round, and at the end of the year (for no other reason) his best friends will not care to mention his name. It is no pleasant reflection that a man has been accused, however unjustly, of a folly or a crime. We involuntarily associate words with things; and the imagination retains an unfavourable impression long after the understanding is disabused. Or if we repel the charge and resent the injustice, this is making a toil of a pleasure, and our cowardice and indolence soon take part with the malice of mankind. The assailants are always the more courageous party. It degrades a man even to be subjected to undeserved reproach, for it seems as if without some flaw or blemish no one would dare to attack him; so that the viler and more unprincipled the abuse, the lower it sinks, not him who offers, but him who is the object of it, in general estimation. If we see a man covered with mud we avoid him without expressing the cause. The favourites of the public, like Cæsar's wife, must not be suspected; and it is enough if we admire and bear witness to the superiority of another under the most favourable circumstances—to do this in spite of secret calumny and vulgar clamour is a pitch of generosity which the world has not arrived at.

III. A certain *manner* makes more conquests than either wit or beauty. Suppose a woman to have a graceful ease of deportment, and a mild self-possession pervading every look and tone of voice; this exercises an immediate influence on a person of an opposite and irritable temperament—it calms and enchants him at once. It is like soft music entering the room—from that time he can only breathe in her presence, and to be torn from her is to be torn from himself for ever.

IV. Fame and popularity are *disparate* quantities, having no common measure. A poet or painter now living may be as great as any poet or painter that ever did live; and if he be so, he will be so thought of by future ages, but he cannot by the present. Persons of overweening vanity and shortsighted ambition, who would forestall the meed of fame, show themselves unworthy of it, for they reduce it to a level with the reputation they have already earned. They should surely leave something to look forward to. It is weighing dross against gold—comparing a meteor with the polar star. Lord Byron's narrowness or presumption in this respect was remarkable.

What! did he not hope to live two hundred years himself, that he should say it was merely a fashion to admire Milton and Shakspeare as it was the fashion to admire him? Those who compare Sir Walter Scott with Shakspeare do not know what they are doing. They may blunt the feeling with which we regard Shakspeare as an old and tried friend, though they cannot transfer it to Sir Walter Scott, who is, after all, but a new and dazzling acquaintance. To argue that there is no difference in the circumstances is not to put the author of 'Waverley' into actual possession of the reversion of fame, but to say that he shall never enjoy it, since it is no better than a chimera and an illusion. It is striking at the foundation of true and lasting renown, and overturning with impatient and thoughtless hands the proud pre-eminence, the golden seats and blest abodes which the predestined heirs of immortality wait for beyond the tomb. The living are merely candidates (more or less successful) for popular applause, the *dead* are a religion, or they are nothing.

V. Persons who tell an artist that he is equal to Claude, or a writer that he is as great as Bacon, do not add to the satisfaction of their hearers, but pay themselves a left-handed compliment, by supposing that their judgment is equivalent to the suffrage of posterity.

VI. A French artist advised young beginners against being too fond of a variety of colours, which might do very well on a smaller scale, but when they came to paint a large picture they would find they had soon lavished all their resources. So superficial writers may deck out their barren round of *common-places in* the finest phrases imaginable; but those who are accustomed to *work out* a subject by dint of study, must not use up their whole stock of eloquence at once, they must bring forward their most appropriate expressions as they approach nearer to the truth, and raise their style with their thoughts. A good general keeps his reserve, the *elite* of his troops, to charge at the critical moment.

VII. 'Procrastination is the thief of time.' It is singular that we are so often loth to begin what gives us great satisfaction in the progress, and what, after we have once begun it, we are as loth to leave off. The reason is, that the imagination is not excited till the first step is taken or the first blow is struck. Before we begin a certain task, we have little notion how we shall set about it, or how we shall proceed: it is like attempting something of which we have no knowledge, and which we feel we are incapable of doing. It is no wonder, therefore, that a strong repugnance accompanies this seeming inaptitude: it is having to *make bricks without straw*. But

after the first effort is over, and we have turned our minds to the subject, one thing suggests another, our ideas pour in faster than we can use them, and we launch into the stream which bears us on with ease and pleasure to ourselves. The painter who did not like to mix his colours or begin on a new canvas in the morning, sees the light close in upon him with unwilling eyes; and the essayist, though gravelled for a thought, or at a loss for words at the outset of his labours, winds up with alacrity and spirit.

VIII. Conversation is like a game at tennis, or any other game of skill. A person shines in one company who makes no figure in another—just as a tolerably good cricketer, who might be an acquisition to a country club, would have his wicket struck down at the first bowl at *Lord's-ground*. The same person is frequently dull at one time and brilliant at another: sometimes those who are most silent at the beginning of an entertainment are most loquacious at the end. There is a *run in the luck* both in cards and conversation. Some people are good speakers but bad hearers: these are put out, unless they have all the talk to themselves. Some are best in a *tête-à-tête*; others in a mixed company. Some persons talk well on a set subject, who can hardly answer a common question, still less pay a compliment or make a *repartee*. Conversation may be divided into the *personal* or the *didactic*: the one resembles the style of a lecture, the other that of a comedy. There are as many who fail in conversation from aiming at too high a standard of excellence, and wishing only to utter oracles or *jeux-d'esprit*, as there are who expose themselves from having no standard at all, and saying whatever comes into their heads. Pedants and gossips compose the largest class. Numbers talk on without paying any attention to the effect they produce upon their audience: some few take no part in the discourse but by assenting to everything that is said, and these are not the worst companions in the world. An outcry is sometimes raised against dull people, as if it were any fault of theirs. The most brilliant performers very soon grow dull, and we like people to begin as they end. There is then no disappointment nor false excitement. The great ingredient in society is good-will. He who is pleased with what he himself has to say, and listens in his turn with patience and good-humour, is wise and witty enough for us. We do not covet those parties where one wit dares not go, because another is expected. How delectable must the encounter of such pretenders be to one another! How edifying to the bye-standers!

IX. It was well said by Mr. Coleridge, that people never improve by contradiction, but by *agreeing to differ*. If you discuss a question

amicably you may gain a clear insight into it; if you dispute about it you only throw dust in one another's eyes. In all angry or violent controversy, your object is not to learn wisdom, but to prove your adversary a fool; and in this respect, it must be admitted, both parties usually succeed.

X. Envy is the ruling passion of mankind. The explanation is obvious. As we are of infinitely more importance in our own eyes than all the world beside, the chief bent and study of the mind is directed to impress others with this self-evident but disputed distinction, and to arm ourselves with the exclusive signatures and credentials of our superiority, and to hate and stifle all that stands in the way of, or obscures, our absurd pretensions. Each individual looks upon himself in the light of a dethroned monarch, and the rest of the world as his rebellious subjects and runaway slaves, who withhold the homage that is his natural due, and burst the chains of opinion he would impose upon them: the madman in Hogarth (sooth to say), with his crown of straw and wooden sceptre, is but a type and *common-place* emblem of every-day life.

XI. It has been made a subject of regret that in forty or fifty years' time (if we go on as we have done) no one will read Fielding. What a falling-off! Already, if you thoughtlessly lend *Joseph Andrews* to a respectable family, you find it returned upon your hands as an improper book. To be sure, people read 'Don Juan'; but *that* is in verse. The worst is, that this senseless fastidiousness is more owing to an affectation of gentility than to a disgust at vice. It is not the scenes that are described at an alehouse, but the *alehouse* at which they take place that gives the mortal stab to taste and refinement. One comfort is, that the manners and characters which are objected to as *low* in Fielding have in a great measure disappeared or taken another shape; and this at least is one good effect of all excellent satire—that it destroys 'the very food whereon it lives.' The generality of readers, who only seek for the representation of existing models, must therefore, after a time, seek in vain for this obvious verisimilitude in the most powerful and popular works of the kind; and will be either disgusted or at a loss to understand the application. People of sense and imagination, who look beyond the surface or the passing folly of the day, will always read *Tom Jones*.

XII. There is a set of critics and philosophers who have never read anything but what has appeared within the last ten years, and to whom every mode of expression or turn of thought extending beyond that period has a very odd effect. They cannot comprehend how

people used such out-of-the-way phrases in the time of Shakspeare; the style of Addison would not do now—even Junius, they think, would make but a shabby *thread-bare* figure in the columns of a modern newspaper—all the riches that the language has acquired in the course of time, all the idiomatic resources arising from study or accident, are utterly discarded—sink under-ground: and all that is admired by the weak or sought after by the vain, is a thin surface of idle affectation and glossy innovations. Even spelling and pronunciation have undergone such changes within a short time, that Pope and Swift require a little *modernizing* to accommodate them to 'ears polite;' and that a *bluestocking belle* would be puzzled in reciting Dryden's sounding verse with its occasional barbarous, oldfashioned accenting, if it were the custom to read Dryden aloud in those serene, morning circles. There is no class more liable to set up this narrow superficial standard, than people of fashion, in their horror of what is vulgar and ignorance of what really is so; they have a jargon of their own, but scout whatever does not fall in with it as Gothic and *outré*; the English phrases handed down from the last age they think come east of Temple-bar, and they perform a sedulous quarantine against them. The *Times*, having found it so written in some outlandish *depêche* of the Marquis of Wellesley's, chose as a mark of the *haute literature*, to spell *dispatch* with an *e*, and for a long time he was held for a novice or an affected and absolute writer who spelt it otherwise. The *Globe*, with its characteristic good sense and sturdiness of spirit has restored the old English spelling in defiance of scandal. Some persons who were growing jealous that the author of *Waverley* had eclipsed their favourite luminaries may make themselves easy; he himself is on the wane with those whose opinions ebb and flow with the 'inconstant moon' of fashion, and has given way (if Mr. Colburn's advertisements speak true, 'than which what 's truer?') to a set of titled nonentities. Nothing solid is to go down, or that is likely to last three months; instead of the standing dishes of old English literature we are to take up with the *nicknacks* and whipt syllabubs of modern taste; are to be occupied with a stream of titlepages, extracts, and specimens, like passing figures in a *camera obscura*, and are to be puzzled in a mob of new books as in the mob of new faces in what was formerly the narrow part of the Strand.

XIII. Never pity people because they are ill-used. They only wait the opportunity to use others just as ill. Hate the oppression and prevent the evil if you can; but do not fancy there is any virtue in being oppressed, or any love lost between the parties. The unfortunate are not a jot more amiable than their neighbours, though they

give themselves out so, and our pity takes part with those who have disarmed our envy.

XIV. The human mind seems to improve, because it is continually in progress. But as it moves forward to new acquisitions and trophies, it loses its hold on those which formerly were its chief boast and employment. Men are better chemists than they were, but worse divines; they read the newspapers, it is true, but neglect the classics. Everything has its turn. Neither is error extirpated so much as it takes a new form and puts on a more artful disguise. Folly shifts its ground, but finds its level: absurdity is never left without a subterfuge. The dupes of dreams and omens in former times, are now the converts to graver and more solemn pieces of quackery. The race of the sanguine, the visionary, and the credulous, of those who believe what they wish, or what excites their wonder, in preference to what they know, or can have rationally explained, will never wear out; and they only transfer their innate love of the marvellous from old and exploded chimeras to fashionable theories, and the *terra incognita* of modern science.

XV. It is a curious speculation to take a modern *belle*, or some accomplished female acquaintance, and conceive what her great-great-grandmother was like, some centuries ago. Who was the Mrs.—— of the year 200? We have some standard of grace and elegance among eastern nations 3000 years ago, because we read accounts of them in history; but we have no more notion of, or faith in, our own ancestors than if we had never had any. We *cut the connexion* with the Druids and the Heptarchy; and cannot fancy ourselves (by any transformation) inmates of caves and woods, or feeders on acorns and sloes. We seem *engrafted* on that low stem—a bright, airy, and insolent excrescence.

XVI. There is this advantage in painting, if there were no other, that it is the truest and most self-evident kind of history. It shows that there were people long ago, and also *what* they were, not in a book darkly, but face to face. It is not the half-formed clay, the oldfashioned dress, as we might conceive; but the living lineaments, the breathing expression. You look at a picture by Vandyke, and there see as in an enchanted mirror, an English woman of quality two hundred years ago, sitting in unconscious state with her child playing at her feet, and with all the dove-like innocence of look, the grace and refinement that it is possible for virtue and breeding to bestow. It is enough to make us proud of our nature and our countrywomen; and dissipates at once

the idle, *upstart* prejudice that all before our time was sordid and scarce civilised. If our progress does not appear so great as our presumption has suggested, what does it signify? With such models kept in view, our chief object ought to be not to degenerate; and though the future prospect is less gaudy and imposing, the retrospect opens a larger and brighter *vista* of excellence.

XVII. I am by education and conviction inclined to republicanism and puritanism. In America they have both; but I confess I feel a little staggered in the practical efficacy and saving grace of *first principles*, when I ask myself, 'Can they throughout the United States, from Boston to Baltimore, produce a single head like one of Titian's Venetian nobles, nurtured in all the pride of aristocracy and all the blindness of popery?' Of all the branches of political economy, the human face is perhaps the best criterion of *value*.

XVIII. die Mer.

## COMMON SENSE

*The Atlas.*] [*October* 11, 1829.

Common sense is a rare and enviable quality. It may be truly said that 'its price is above rubies.' How many learned men, how many wits, how many geniuses, how many dull and ignorant people, how many cunning knaves, how many well-meaning fools are without it! How few have it, and how little do they or others know of it, except from the infallible results—for one of its first requisites is the utter absence of all pretension! The vulgar laugh at the pedant and enthusiast for the want of it, while they themselves mistake bigotry and narrow-minded notions for it. It is not one of the sciences, but has been well pronounced to be 'fairly worth the seven.' It is a kind of mental instinct, that feels the air of truth and propriety as the fingers feel objects of touch. It does not consist with ignorance, for we cannot pronounce on what we do not know; and on the other hand, the laying in a stock of knowledge, or mastering any art or science, seems to destroy that native simplicity, and to warp and trammel the unbiassed freedom of mind which is necessary to its receiving and giving their due weight to ordinary and casual impressions. Common sense is neither a peculiar talent nor a laborious acquirement, but may be regarded as a sound and impartial judgment operating on the daily practice of life, or on what 'comes home to the business and bosoms of men'; combined with great attainments and speculative inquiries, it would justly earn the title of *wisdom*; but of the latter we have never known a single instance, though we have met with a few of the former; that is, we have known a number of

persons who were wise in the affairs of the world and in what concerned their own interest, but none who, beyond this, and in judging of general questions, were not the dupes of some flaw of temper, of some weakness or vanity, or even striking advantage of their own. To give an example of two in illustration. A person may be an excellent scholar, a good mathematician, well versed in law and history, a first-rate chess-player, a dazzling fencer, in a word, a sort of *admirable Crichton*—you are disposed to admire or envy so many talents united—you smile to see him wanting in common sense, and getting into a dispute about a *douceur* to a paltry police-officer, and thinking to interest all Europe and both Houses of Parliament in his success. It is true, he has law and reason on his side, has Grotius and Puffendorf and the *statutes at large* doubled down in dog-ears for the occasion, has a vast and lively apparatus of well-arranged premises and conclusions ready to play off against his adversaries ; but he does not consider that he has to deal with interest and custom, those impalpable, intangible essences, that 'fear no discipline of human wit.' Does he think to check-mate the police ? Will he stop the mouth of a hungry tide-waiter with a syllogism ? Or supersede a perquisite by the *reductio ad absurdum* ? It is a want of common sense, or the not distinguishing properly between the definite and the indefinite. No one can have arrived at years of discretion without knowing or feeling that he cannot take a single step without some compromise with existing circumstances ; that the path of life is intercepted with innumerable turnpike-gates, at which he must pay down the toll of his own convictions and of strict justice ; that he cannot walk the streets but by tacit allowance ; and that to disregard all impediments in the right line of reason and written forms is to imitate the conduct of *Commodore Trunnion*, who mistook the land for the sea, and went to be married by the wind and compass. The proofs of this occur every hour of the day—they may not be registered, they may not be remembered, but they are virtually and effectively noted down by the faculty of common sense, which does not feel its way the less surely because it proceeds often mechanically and blindly. There may be exceptions indeed to ordinary rules, on which a man may go to martyrdom and a stake (such as that of Hampden and ship-money), but these occur once in a century, and are only met with at the corners of streets by those who have an excess of logical discrimination, and have to pay a certain tax for being too clever by half. It is the fashion at present among the philosophical vulgar to decry *feeling*, both the name and the thing. It would be difficult, however, to do without it : for this word embraces all that mass of knowledge and of common sense which lies between the extremes of positive proof or

demonstration and downright ignorance; and those who would pragmatically confine their own convictions or those of others to what is absolutely known and understood, would at best become scientific pedants and artificial barbarians. There are some persons who are the victims of argument; as there are others who are the slaves of minute details and matters of fact. One class will have a reason for every thing, and will admit the greatest absurdities that are formally proposed to them; the other must have facts to support every conclusion, and can never see an inch beyond their noses. The last have the *organ of individuality* largely developed, and are proportionably deficient in common sense. Their ideas are all local and literal. To borrow the language of a great but obscure metaphysician, their minds are *epileptic*; that is, are in perpetual throes and convulsions, fasten on every object in their way not to help but to hinder their progress, and have no voluntary power to let go their hold of a particular circumstance, to grasp the whole of any question, or suspend their judgment for an instant. The fact that is before them is every thing; the rest goes for nothing. They are always at cross-purposes with themselves, for their decisions are the result of the last evidence, without any corrective or qualifier in common sense; in the hunt after proofs, they forget their principles, and gain their point, though they lose their cause.

The Scotch have much of this *matter-of-fact* understanding, and bigotry to personal and actual statistics. They would persuade you that there is no country but Scotland, nothing but what is Scotch. Mr. Mac Alpine shifts the discourse from the metropolis, hurries rapidly over the midland counties, crosses the border, and sits down to an exordium in praise of the 'kindly Scot.' Charity has its home and hearth by Tweed-side, where he was born and bred, Scotch beggars were quite different from English beggars: there was none of the hard-heartedness towards them that was always shown in England. His mother, though not a rich woman, always received them kindly, and had a bag of meal out of which she always gave them something, as they went their rounds. 'Lord! Mr. Mac Alpine!' says Mrs. Mac Alpine, 'other people have mothers as well as you, and there are beggars in England as well as Scotland. Why, in Yorkshire, where I was brought up, common beggars used to come round just as you describe, and my mother, who was no richer than yours, used to give them a crust of bread or broken victuals just in the same way; you make such a *fuss* about nothing.' Women are best to set these follies to rights:—

> 'They have no figures nor no fantasies,
> Which busy thought draws in the brains of men.'

If no great philosophers, they do not want common sense; and are only misled in what lies beyond their sphere of feeling and observation, by taking up the opinions of their *better halves*. The common people in like manner do not want common sense in what falls under their especial cognizance and daily practice. A country-shoemaker or plough-man understands shoemaking, and can 'crack of ploughs and kine,' though he knows nothing of the Catholic question. If an old woman in a country-town believes she shall be burnt at a stake, now that this question is settled, it is because she is told so by those who ought to know better, and who impose *their* prejudices upon *her* ignorance. Vulgar errors which are taken on trust, or are traditional, or are the blunders of ignorance on points of learning, have nothing to do with common sense, which decides only on facts and feelings which have come under its own notice. Common sense and *common place* are also the antipodes of each other: the one is a collection of true experiences, the other a routine of cant phrases. All affectation is the death of common sense, which requires the utmost simplicity and sincerity. Liars must be without common sense, for instead of considering what things really are, their whole time and attention are taken up in imposing false appearances on themselves and their neighbours. No conceited person can have the faculty we have been speaking of, since all objects are tinged and changed from their proper hue by the idle reflection of their fancied excellence and superiority. Great talkers are in the same predicament, for they sacrifice truth to a fine speech or sentiment, and conceal the real consequences of things from their view by a cloud of words, of empty breath. They look at nature not to study what it is, but to discover what they can say about it. Passionate people are generally thought to be devoid of judgment. They may be so, when their passions are touched to the quick; but without a certain degree of natural irritability, we do not conceive truth leaves sufficient stings in the mind, and we judge correctly of things according to the interest we take in them. No one can be a physiognomist, for example, or have an insight into character and expression, without the correspondent germs of these in his own breast. Phlegmatic C——, with all his husbandry acquirements, is but half a philosopher, half a clown. Poets, if they have not common sense, can do very well without it. What need have they to conform their ideas to the actual world, when they can create a world according to their fancy? We know of no remedy for want of tact and insight into human affairs, any more than for the defect of any other organ. *Tom Jones* is, we think, the best horn-book for students in this way; and if the novice should rise up no wiser from its repeated perusal, at least such an employment of his time will be

better than playing the fool or talking nonsense. After all, the most absurd characters are those who are so, not from a want of common sense, but who act in defiance of their better knowledge. The capricious and fickle who change every moment, the perverse who aim only at what is placed out of their reach, the obstinate who pursue a losing cause, the idle and vicious who ruin themselves and every one connected with them, do it as often with their eyes open as from blind infatuation; and it is the bias of their wills, not the deficiency of their understandings, that is in fault. The greatest fools in practice are sometimes the wisest men in theory, for they have all the advantage of their own experience and self-reflection to prompt them; and they can give the best advice to others, though they do not conceive themselves bound to follow it in their own instance. *Video meliora proboque*, etc. Their judgments may be clear and just, but their habits and affections lie all the wrong way; and it is as useless as it would be cruel to expect them to reform, since they only delight and can only exist in their darling absurdities and daily and hourly *escapades* from common sense and reason.

## THE SPIRIT OF CONTROVERSY

*The Atlas.*] [*January* 31, 1830.

The Spirit of Controversy has often been arraigned as the source of much bitterness and vexation, as productive of 'envy, malice, and all uncharitableness': and the charge, no doubt, is too well founded. But it is said to be *an ill wind that blows nobody good*; and there are few evils in life that have not some qualifying circumstance attending them. It is one of the worst consequences of this very spirit of controversy that it has led men to regard things too much in a single and exaggerated point of view. Truth is not one thing, but has many aspects and many shades of difference; it is neither all black nor all white; sees something wrong on its own side, something right in others; makes concessions to an adversary, allowances for human frailty, and is nearer akin to charity than the dealers in controversy or the declaimers against it are apt to imagine. The bigot and partisan (influenced by the very spirit he finds fault with) sees nothing in the endless disputes which have tormented and occupied men's thoughts but an abuse of learning and a waste of time: the philosopher may still find an excuse for so bad and idle a practice. One frequent objection made to the incessant wrangling and collision of sects and parties is, *What does it all come to*? And the answer is, *What would they have done without it*? The pleasure of the chase, or the benefit

derived from it, is not to be estimated by the value of the game after it is caught, so much as by the difficulty of starting it and the exercise afforded to the body and the excitement of the animal spirits in hunting it down: and so it is in the exercises of the mind and the pursuit of truth, which are chiefly valuable (perhaps) less for their results when discovered, than for their affording continual scope and employment to the mind in its endeavours to reach the fancied goal, without its being ever (or but seldom) able to attain it. *Regard the end*, is an ancient saying, and a good one, if it does not mean that we are to forget the *beginning* and the *middle*. By insisting on the ultimate value of things when all is over, we may acquire the character of *grave* men, but not of wise ones. *Passe pour cela.* If we would set up such a sort of fixed and final standard of moral truth and worth, we had better try to construct life over again, so as to make it a *punctum stans*, and not a thing in progress; for as it is, every end, before it can be realised, implies a previous imagination, a warm interest in, and an active pursuit of, itself, all which are integral and vital parts of human existence, and it is a begging of the question to say that an end is only of value in itself, and not as it draws out the living resources, and satisfies the original capacities of human nature. When the play is over, the curtain drops, and we see nothing but a green cloth; but before this, there have been five acts of brilliant scenery and high-wrought declamation, which, if we come to plain matter-of-fact and history, are still something. According to the contrary theory, nothing is real but a blank. This flatters the paradoxical pride of man, whose motto is, *all or none*. Look at that pile of school divinity! Behold where the demon of controversy lies buried! The huge tomes are mouldy and worm-eaten:—did their contents the less eat into the brain, or corrode the heart, or stir the thoughts, or fill up the void of lassitude and *ennui* in the minds of those who wrote them? Though now laid aside and forgotten, if they had not once had a host of readers, they would never have been written; and their hard and solid bulk asked the eager tooth of curiosity and zeal to pierce through it. We laugh to see their ponderous dulness weighed in scales, and sold for waste paper. We should not laugh too soon. On the smallest difference of faith or practice discussed in them, the fate of kingdoms hung suspended; and not merely so (which was a trifle) but Heaven and Hell trembled in the balance, according to the full persuasion of our pious forefathers. Many a drop of blood flowed in the field or on the scaffold, from these tangled briars and thorns of controversy; many a man marched to a stake to bear testimony to the most frivolous and incomprehensible of their dogmas. This was an untoward consequence; but if it was an

evil to be burnt at a stake, it was well and becoming to have an opinion (whether right or wrong) for which a man was willing to be burnt at a stake. Read Baxter's *Controversial Works*: consider the flames of zeal, the tongues of fire, the heights of faith, the depths of subtlety, which they unfold, as in a darkly illuminated scroll; and then ask how much we are gainers by an utter contempt and indifference to all this? We wonder at the numberless volumes of sermons that have been written, preached, and printed on the Arian and Socinian controversies, on Calvinism and Arminianism, on surplices and stoles, on infant or adult baptism, on image-worship and the defacing of images; and we forget that it employed the preacher all the week to prepare his sermon (be the subject what it would) for the next Lord's-day, with infinite collating of texts, authorities, and arguments; that his flock were no less edified by listening to it on the following Sunday; and how many *David Deans's* came away convinced that they had been listening to the 'root of the matter'! See that group collected after service-time and pouring over the grave-stones in the churchyard, from whence, to the eye of faith, a light issues that points to the skies! See them disperse; and as they take different paths homeward while the evening closes in, still discoursing of the true doctrine and the glad tidings they have heard, how 'their hearts burn within them by the way'! Then again, we should set down, among other items in the account, how the school-boy is put to it to remember the text, and how the lazy servant-wench starts up to find herself asleep in church-time! Such is the business of human life; and we, who fancy ourselves above it, are only so much the more taken up with follies of our own. We look down in this age of reason on those controverted points and nominal distinctions which formerly kept up such 'a coil and pudder' in the world, as idle and ridiculous, because we are not parties to them; but if it was the *egotism* of our predecessors that magnified them beyond all rational bounds, it is no less egotism in us who undervalue their opinions and pursuits because they are not ours; and, indeed, to leave egotism out of human nature, is 'to leave the part of *Hamlet* out of the play of *Hamlet*.' Or what are we the better with our *Utilitarian Controversies*, Mr. Taylor's discourses (delivered in canonicals) against the evidence of the Christian religion, or the changes of ministry and disagreements between the Duke of Wellington and the Duke of Newcastle?

> 'Strange! that such difference should be
> 'Twixt Tweedledum and Tweedledee!'

But the prevalence of religious controversy is reproached with

fomenting spiritual pride and intolerance, and sowing heart-burnings, jealousies, and fears, 'like a thick scurf o'er life;' yet, had it not been for this, we should have been tearing one another to pieces like savages for fragments of raw flesh, or quarrelling with a herd of swine for a windfall of acorns under an oak-tree. The world has never yet done, and will never be able to do, without some apple of discord—some bone of contention—any more than courts of law can do without pleadings, or hospitals without the sick. When a thing ceases to be a subject of controversy, it ceases to be a subject of interest. Why need we regret the various hardships and persecutions for conscience-sake, when men only clung closer to their opinions in consequence? They loved their religion in proportion as they paid dear for it. Nothing could keep the Dissenters from going to a conventicle while it was declared an unlawful assembly, and was the highroad to a prison or the plantations—take away tests and fines, and make the road open and easy, and the sect dwindles gradually into insignificance. A thing is supposed to be worth nothing that costs nothing. Besides, there is always pretty nearly the same quantity of malice afloat in the world; though with the change of time and manners it may become a finer poison, and kill by more unseen ways. When the sword has done its worst, slander, 'whose edge is sharper than the sword,' steps in to keep the blood from stagnating. Instead of slow fires and paper caps fastened round the heads of the victims, we arrive at the same end by a politer way of nicknames and anonymous criticism. *Blackwood's Magazine* is the modern version of Fox's *Book of Martyrs*. Discard religion and politics (the two grand topics of controversy), and people would hate each other as cordially, and torment each other as effectually about the preference to be given to Mozart or Rossini, to Malibran or Pasta. We indeed fix upon the most excellent things, as God, our country, and our King, to account for the excess of our zeal; but this depends much less upon the goodness of our cause than on the strength of our passions, and our overflowing gall and rooted antipathy to whatever stands in the way of our conceit and obstinacy. We set up an idol (as we set up a mark to shoot at) for others to bow down to, on peril of our utmost displeasure, let the value of it be what it may——

> 'Of whatsoe'er descent his Godhead be,
> Stock, stone, or other homely pedigree,
> In his defence his servants are as bold
> As if he had been born of beaten gold.'

It is, however, but fair to add, in extenuation of the evils of controversy, that if the points at issue had been quite clear, or the

advantage all on one side, they would not have been so liable to be contested about. We condemn controversy, because we would have matters all our own way, and think that ours is the only side that has a title to be heard. We imagine that there is but one view of a subject that is right; and that all the rest being plainly and wilfully wrong, it is a shocking waste of speech, and a dreadful proof of prejudice and party spirit, to have a word to say in their defence. But this is a want of liberality and comprehension of mind. For in general we dispute either about things respecting which we are a good deal in the dark, and where both parties are very possibly in the wrong, and may be left to find out their mutual error; or about those points, where there is an opposition of interests and passions, and where it would be by no means safe to cut short the debate by making one party judges for the other. They must, therefore, be left to fight it out as well as they can; and, between the extremes of folly and violence, to strike a balance of common sense and even-handed justice. Every sect or party will, of course, run into extravagance and partiality; but the probability is, that there is some ground of argument, some appearance of right, to justify the grossest bigotry and intolerance. The fury of the combatants is excited because there is something to be said on the other side of the question. If men were as infallible as they suppose themselves, they would not dispute. If every novelty were well-founded, truth might be discovered by a receipt; but as antiquity does not always turn out an old woman, this accounts for the *vis inertiæ* of the mind in so often pausing and setting its face against innovation. Authority has some advantages to recommend it as well as reason, or it would long ago have been scouted. Aristocracy and democracy, monarchy and republicanism, are not all pure good or pure evil, though the abettors or antagonists of each think so, and that all the mischief arises from others entertaining any doubt about the question, and insisting on carrying their absurd theories into practice. The French and English are grossly prejudiced against each other; but still the interests of each are better taken care of under this exaggerated notion than if that vast mass of rights and pretensions, which each is struggling for, were left to the tender mercies and ruthless candour of the other side. '*Every man for himself and God for us all*' is a rule that will apply here. Controversy, therefore, is a necessary evil or good (call it which you will) till all differences of opinion or interest are reconciled, and absolute certainty or perfect indifference alike takes away the possibility or the temptation to litigation and quarrels. We need be under no immediate alarm of coming to such a conclusion. There is always room for doubt, food for contention. While we are

engrossed with one controversy, indeed, we think every thing else is clear; but as soon as one point is settled, we begin to cavil and start objections to that which has before been taken for gospel. The Reformers thought only of opposing the Church of Rome, and never once anticipated the schisms and animosities which arose among Protestants: the Dissenters, in carrying their point against the Church of England, did not dream of that crop of infidelity and scepticism which, to their great horror and scandal, sprung up in the following age, from their claim of free inquiry and private judgment. The *non-essentials* of religion first came into dispute; then the essentials. Our own opinion, we fancy, is founded on a rock; the rest we regard as stubble. But no sooner is one out-work of established faith or practice demolished, than another is left a defenceless mark for the enemy, and the engines of wit and sophistry immediately begin to batter it. Thus we proceed step by step, till, passing through the several gradations of vanity and paradox, we came to doubt whether we stand on our head or our heels, alternately deny the existence of spirit and matter, maintain that black is white, call evil good and good evil, and defy any one to prove the contrary. As faith is the prop and cement that upholds society by opposing fixed principles as a barrier against the inroads of passion, so reason is the *menstruum* which dissolves it by leaving nothing sufficiently firm or unquestioned in our opinions to withstand the current and bias of inclination. Hence the decay and ruin of states—then barbarism, sloth, and ignorance—and so we commence the circle again of building up all that it is possible to conceive out of a rude chaos, and the obscure shadowings of things, and then pulling down all that we have built up, till not a trace of it is left. Such is the effect of the ebb and flow and restless agitation of the human mind.

## ENVY

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Envy is the *grudging* or receiving pain from any accomplishment or advantage possessed by another. It is one of the most tormenting and odious of the passions, inasmuch as it does not consist in the enjoyment or pursuit of any good to ourselves, but in the hatred and jealousy of the good fortune of others and the debarring and defrauding them of their due and what is of no use to us, on the *dog in the manger* principle; and it is at the same time as mean as it is revolting, as being accompanied with a sense of weakness and a desire to conceal and tamper with the truth and its own convictions, out of paltry spite and

vanity. It is, however, but an excess or excrescence of the other passions (such as pride or avarice) or of a wish to monopolise all the good things of life to ourselves, which makes us impatient and dissatisfied at seeing any one else in possession of that to which we think we have the only fair title. Envy is the deformed and distorted offspring of *egotism*; and when we reflect on the strange and disproportioned character of the parent, we cannot wonder at the perversity and waywardness of the child. Such is the absorbing and exorbitant quality of our self-love, that it represents us as of infinitely more importance in our own eyes than the whole universe put together, and would sacrifice the claims and interest of all the world beside to the least of its caprices or extravagances: need we be surprised then that this little, upstart, overweening self, that would trample on the globe itself and then weep for new ones to conquer, should be uneasy, mad, mortified, eaten up with chagrin and melancholy, and hardly able to bear its own existence, at seeing a single competitor among the crowd cross its path, jostle its pretensions, and stagger its opinion of its exclusive right to admiration and superiority? This it is that constitutes the offence, that gives the shock, that inflicts the wound, that some poor creature (as we would fain suppose) whom we had before overlooked and entirely disregarded as not worth our notice, should of a sudden enter the lists and challenge comparison with us. The presumption is excessive; and so is our thirst of revenge. From the moment, however, that the eye fixes on another as the object of envy, we cannot take it off; for our pride and self-conceit magnify that which obstructs our success and lessens our self-importance into a monster; we see nothing else, we hear of nothing else, we dream of nothing else, it haunts us and takes possession of our whole souls; and as we are engrossed by it ourselves, so we fancy that all the rest of the world are equally taken up with our petty annoyances and disappointed pride. Hence the 'jealous leer malign' of envy, which, not daring to look that which provokes it in the face, cannot yet keep its eyes from it, and gloats over and becomes as it were enamoured of the very object of its loathing and deadly hate. We pay off the score which our littleness and vanity has been running up, by ample and gratuitous concessions to the first person that gives a check to our swelling self-complacency, and forces us to drag him into an unwilling comparison with ourselves. It is no matter who the person is, what his pretensions—if they are a counterpoise to our own, we think them of more consequence than anything else in the world. This often gives rise to laughable results. We see the jealousies among servants, hackney-coachmen, cobblers in a stall; we are amused with the rival advertisements of quacks and stage-coach

proprietors, and smile to read the significant intimation on some shop window, 'No connection with the next door;' but the same folly runs through the whole of life; each person thinks that he who stands in his way or outstrips him in a particular pursuit, is the most enviable, and at the same time the most hateful character in the world. Nothing can show the absurdity of the passion of envy in a more striking point of view than the number of rival claims which it entirely overlooks, while it would arrogate all excellence to itself. The loftiness of our ambition and the narrowness of our views are equal, and indeed both depend upon the same cause. The player envies only the player, the poet envies only the poet, because each confines his idea of excellence to his own profession and pursuit, and thinks, if he could but remove some hapless competitor out of his way, he should have a clear stage to himself, or be a 'Phœnix gazed by all:' as if, though we crushed one rival, another would not start up; or as if there were not a thousand other claims, a thousand other modes of excellence and praiseworthy acquirements, to divide the palm and defeat his idle pretension to the sole and unqualified admiration of mankind. Professors of every class see merit only in their own line; yet they would blight and destroy that *little bit* of excellence which alone they acknowledge to exist, except as it centres in themselves. Speak in praise of an actor to another actor, and he turns away with impatience and disgust: speak disparagingly of the first as an actor in general, and the latter eagerly takes up the quarrel as his own: thus the *esprit de corps* only comes in as an appendage to our self-love. It is perhaps well that we are so blind to merit out of our immediate sphere, for it might only prove an additional *eye-sore*, increase the obliquity of our mental vision, multiply our antipathies, or end in total indifference and despair. There is nothing so bad as a cynical apathy and contempt for every art and science from a superficial *smattering* and general acquaintance with them all. The merest pedantry and the most tormenting jealousy and heart-burnings of envy are better than this. Those who are masters of different advantages and accomplishments, are seldom the more satisfied with them: they still aim at something else (however contemptible) which they have not or cannot do. So Pope says of Wharton—

> 'Though wondering senates hung on all he spoke,
> The club must hail him master of the joke.
> Shall parts so various aim at nothing new?
> He'll shine a Tully and a Wilmot too.'

The world, indeed, are pretty even with these constellations of splendid and superfluous qualities in their fastidious estimate of their

own pretensions, for (if possible) they never give any individual credit for more than one leading attainment. If a man is an artist, his being a fine musician adds nothing to his fame. When the public strain a point to own one claim, it is on condition that the fortunate candidate waives every other. The mind is prepared with a plausible antithesis in such cases against the formidable encroachments of vanity: one qualification is regularly made a foil to another. We allow no one to be two things at a time: it quite unsettles our notions of personal identity. If we allow a man wit, it is part of the bargain that he wants judgment: if style he wants matter. Rich, but a fool or miser—a beauty, but vain; *so runs the bond.* 'But' is the favourite monosyllable of envy and self-love. Raphael could draw and Titian could colour—we shall never get beyond this point while the world stands; the human understanding is not cast in a mould to receive double proofs of entire superiority to itself. It is folly to expect it. If a farther claim be set up, we call in question the solidity of the first, incline to retract it, and suspect that the whole is a juggle and a piece of impudence, as we threaten a common beggar with the stocks for following us to ask a second alms. This is, in fact, one source of the prevalence and deep root which envy has in the human mind: we are incredulous as to the truth and justice of the demands which are so often made upon our pity or our admiration; but let the distress or the merit be established beyond all controversy, and we open our hearts and purses on the spot, and sometimes run into the contrary extreme when charity or admiration becomes the fashion. No one envies the *Author of Waverley*, because all admire him, and are sensible that admire him how they will, they can never admire him enough. We do not envy the sun for shining, when we feel the benefit and see the light. When some persons start an injudicious parallel between him and Shakspeare, we then may grow jealous and uneasy, because this interferes with our older and more firmly rooted conviction of genius, and one which has stood a severer and surer test. Envy has, then, some connexion with a sense of justice—is a defence against imposture and quackery. Though we do not willingly give up the secret and silent consciousness of our own worth to vapouring and false pretences, we do homage to the true candidate for fame when he appears, and even exult and take a pride in our capacity to appreciate the highest desert. This is one reason why we do not envy the dead—less because they are removed out of our way, than because all doubt and diversity of opinion is dismissed from the question of their title to veneration and respect. Our tongue, having a license, grows wanton in their praise. We do not envy or stint our admiration of Rubens,

because the mists of uncertainty or prejudice are withdrawn by the hand of time from the splendour of his works. Fame is to genius—

> 'Like to a gate of steel fronting the sun,
> That renders back its figure and its heat.'

We give full and unbounded scope to our impressions when they are confirmed by successive generations; as we form our opinions coldly and slowly while we are afraid our judgment may be reversed by posterity. We trust the testimony of ages, for it is true; we are no longer in pain lest we should be deceived by varnish and tinsel; and feel assured that the praise and the work are both sterling. In contemporary reputation, the greater and more transcendant the merit, the less is the envy attending it; which shows that this passion is not, after all, a mere barefaced hatred and detraction from acknowledged excellence. Mrs. Siddons was not an object of envy; her unrivalled powers defied competitors or gainsayers. If Kean had a party against him, it was composed of those who could not or would not see his merits through his defects; and in like manner, John Kemble's elevation to the tragic throne was not carried by loud and tumultuous acclamation, because the stately height which he attained was the gradual result of labour and study, and his style of acting did not flash with the inspiration of the God. We are backward to bestow a heaped measure of praise, whenever there is any inaptitude or incongruity that acts to damp or throw a stumbling-block in the way of our enthusiasm. Hence the jealousy and dislike shown towards upstart wealth, as we cannot in our imaginations reconcile the former poverty of the possessors with their present magnificence—we despise fortune-hunters in ambition as well as in love—and hence, no doubt, one strong ground of hereditary right. We acquiesce more readily in an assumption of superiority that in the first place implies no merit (which is a great relief to the baser sort), and in the second, that baffles opposition by seeming a thing inevitable, taken for granted, and transmitted in the common course of nature. In contested elections, where the precedence is understood to be awarded to rank and title, there is observed to be less acrimony and obstinacy than when it is supposed to depend on individual merit and fitness for the office; no one willingly allows another more ability or honesty than himself, but he cannot deny that another may be *better born*. Learning again is more freely admitted than genius, because it is of a more positive quality, and is felt to be less essentially a part of a man's self; and with regard to the grosser and more invidious distinction of wealth, it may be difficult to substitute any finer test of respectability for it, since it

is hard to fathom the depth of a man's understanding, but the length of his purse is soon known ; and besides, there is a little collusion in the case :—

'The learned pate ducks to the golden fool.'

We bow to a patron who gives us a good dinner and his countenance for our pains, and interest bribes and lulls envy asleep. The most painful kind of envy is the envy towards inferiors ; for we cannot bear to think that a person (in other respects utterly insignificant) should have or seem to have an advantage over us in any thing we have set our hearts upon, and it strikes at the very root of our self-love to be foiled by those we despise. There is some dignity in a contest with power and acknowledged reputation : but a triumph over the sordid and the mean is itself a mortification, while a defeat is intolerable.

## ON PREJUDICE

*The Atlas.*] [*April* 11, 1830.

Prejudice, in its ordinary and literal sense, is *prejudging* any question without having sufficiently examined it, and adhering to our opinion upon it through ignorance, malice, or perversity, in spite of every evidence to the contrary. The little that we know has a strong alloy of misgiving and uncertainty in it : the mass of things of which we have no means of judging, but of which we form a blind and confident opinion as if we were thoroughly acquainted with them, is monstrous. Prejudice is the child of ignorance ; for as our actual knowledge falls short of our desire to know, or curiosity and interest in the world about us, so must we be tempted to decide upon a greater number of things at a venture ; and having no check from reason or inquiry, we shall grow more obstinate and bigoted in our conclusions, according as they have been rash and presumptuous. The absence of proof, instead of suspending our judgments, only gives us an opportunity to make things out according to our wishes and fancies ; mere ignorance is a blank canvas on which we lay what colours we please, and paint objects black or white, as angels or devils, magnify or diminish them at our option ; and in the vacuum either of facts or arguments, the weight of prejudice and passion falls with double force, and bears down everything before it. If we enlarge the circle of our previous knowledge ever so little, we may meet with something to create doubt and difficulty ; but as long as we remain confined to the cell of our native ignorance, while we know nothing beyond the routine of sense and custom, we shall refer everything to that standard,

or make it out as we would have it to be, like spoiled children who have never been from home, and expect to find nothing in the world that does not accord with their wishes and notions. It is evident, that the fewer things we know, the more ready we shall be to pronounce upon and condemn, what is new and strange to us; that is, the less capable we shall be of varying our conceptions, and the more prone to mistake a part for the whole. What we do not understand the meaning of must necessarily appear to us ridiculous and contemptible; and we do not stop to inquire, till we have been taught by repeated experiments and warnings of our own fallibility, whether the absurdity is in ourselves or in the object of our dislike and scorn. The most ignorant people are rude and insolent, as the most barbarous are cruel and ferocious. All our knowledge at first lying in a narrow compass (bounded by local and physical causes) whatever does not conform to this shocks us as out of reason and nature. The less we look abroad, the more our ideas are introverted; and our habitual impressions, from being made up of a few particulars always repeated, grow together into a kind of concrete substance, which will not bear taking to pieces, and where the smallest deviation destroys the whole feeling. Thus the difference of colour in a black man was thought to forfeit his title to belong to the species, till books of voyages and travels, and old Fuller's quaint expression of 'God's image carved in ebony,' have brought the two ideas into a forced union, and Mr. Murray no longer libels men of colour with impunity. The word *republic* has a harsh and incongruous sound to ears bred under a constitutional monarchy; and we strove hard for many years to overturn the French republic, merely because we could not reconcile it to ourselves that such a thing should exist at all, notwithstanding the examples of Holland, Switzerland, and many others. This term has hardly yet performed quarantine: to the loyal and patriotic it has an ugly taint in it, and is scarcely fit to be mentioned in good company. If, however, we are weaned by degrees from our prejudices against certain words that shock opinion, this is not the case with all; for those that offend good manners grow more offensive with the progress of refinement and civilization, so that no writer now dare venture upon expressions that unwittingly disfigure the pages of our elder writers, and in this respect, instead of becoming callous or indifferent, we appear to become more fastidious every day. There is then a real grossness which does not depend on familiarity or custom. This account of the concrete nature of prejudice, or of the manner in which our ideas by habit and the dearth of general information coalesce together into one indissoluble form, will show (what otherwise seems unaccountable) how such violent antipathies and animosities have been

occasioned by the most ridiculous or trifling differences of opinion, or outward symbols of it; for, by constant custom, and the want of reflection, the most insignificant of these was as inseparably bound up with the main principle as the most important, and to give up any part was to give up the whole essence and vital interests of religion, morals, and government. Hence we see all sects and parties mutually insist on their own technical distinctions as the essentials and fundamentals of religion, and politics, and, for the slightest variation in any of these, unceremoniously attack their opponents as atheists and blasphemers, traitors and incendiaries. In fact, these minor points are laid hold of in preference, as being more obvious and tangible, and as leaving more room for the exercise of prejudice and passion. Another thing that makes our prejudices rancorous and inveterate, is, that as they are taken up without reason, they seem to be *self-evident*; and we thence conclude, that they not only are so to ourselves, but must be so to others, so that their differing from us is wilful, hypocritical, and malicious. The Inquisition never pretended to punish its victims for being heretics or infidels, but for avowing opinions which with their eyes open they knew to be false. That is, the whole of the Catholic faith, 'that one entire and perfect chrysolite,' appeared to them so completely without flaw and blameless, that they could not conceive how any one else could imagine it to be otherwise, except from stubbornness and contumacy, and would rather admit (to avoid so improbable a suggestion) that men went to a stake for an opinion, not which they held, but counterfeited, and were content to be burnt for the pleasure of playing the hypocrite. Nor is it wonderful that there should be so much repugnance to admit the existence of a serious doubt in matters of such vital and eternal interest, and on which the whole fabric of the church hinged, since the first doubt that was expressed on any single point drew all the rest after it; and the first person who started a conscientious scruple, and claimed the *trial by reason*, threw down, as if by a magic spell, the strongholds of bigotry and superstition, and transferred the determination of the issue from the blind tribunal of prejudice and implicit faith to a totally different ground, the fair and open field of argument and inquiry. On this ground a single champion is a match for thousands. The decision of the majority is not here enough: unanimity is absolutely necessary to infallibility; for the only secure plea on which such a preposterous pretension could be set up is, by taking it for granted that there can be no possible doubt entertained upon the subject, and by diverting men's minds from ever asking themselves the question of the truth of certain dogmas and mysteries, any more than whether *two and two make four*. Prejudice in short

is egotism: we see a part, and substitute it for the whole; a thing strikes us casually and by halves, and we would have the universe stand proxy for our decision, in order to rivet it more firmly in our own belief; however insufficient or sinister the grounds of our opinions, we would persuade ourselves that they arise out of the strongest conviction, and are entitled to unqualified approbation; slaves of our own prejudices, caprice, ignorance, we would be lords of the understandings and reason of others; and (strange infatuation!) taking up an opinion solely from our own narrow and partial point of view, without consulting the feelings of others, or the reason of things, we are still uneasy if all the world do not come into our way of thinking.

## THE SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED

*The Atlas.*] [*April* 18, 1830.

The most dangerous enemies to established opinions are those who, by always defending them, call attention to their weak sides. The priests and politicians, in former times, were therefore wise in preventing the first approaches of innovation and inquiry; in preserving inviolate the smallest link in the adamantine chain with which they had bound the bodies and the souls of men; in closing up every avenue or pore through which a doubt could creep in; for they knew that through the slightest crevice floods of irreligion and heresy would break in like a tide. Hence the constant alarm at free discussion and inquiry; hence the clamour against innovation and reform; hence our dread and detestation of those who differ with us in opinion, for this at once puts us on the necessity of defending ourselves, or of owning ourselves weak or in the wrong, if we cannot, and converts that which was before a bed of roses, while we slept undisturbed upon it, into a cushion of thorns; and hence our natural tenaciousness of those points which are most vulnerable, and of which we have no proof to offer; for, as reason fails us, we are more annoyed by the objections and require to be soothed and supported by the concurrence of others. Bigotry and intolerance, which pass as synonymous, are, if rightly considered, a contradiction in terms; for, if in drawing up the articles of our creed, we are blindly bigoted to our impressions and views, utterly disregarding all others, why should we afterwards be so haunted and disturbed by the last, as to wish to exterminate every difference of sentiment with fire and sword? The difficulty is only solved by considering that unequal compound, the human mind, alternately swayed by individual biasses and abstract pretensions, and

where reason so often panders to, or is made the puppet of, the will. To show at once the danger and extent of prejudice, it may be sufficient to observe that all our convictions, however arrived at, and whether founded on strict demonstration or the merest delusion, are crusted over with the same varnish of confidence and conceit, and afford the same firm footing both to our theories and practice; or if there be any difference, we are in general 'most ignorant of what we are most assured,' the strength of will and impatience of contradiction making up for the want of evidence. Mr. Burke says, that we ought to 'cherish our prejudices because they are prejudices;' but this view of the case will satisfy the demands of neither party, for prejudice is never easy unless it can pass itself off for reason, or abstract undeniable truth: and again, in the eye of reason, if all prejudices are to be equally respected as such, then the prejudices of others are right, and ours must in their turn be wrong. The great stumbling-block to candour and liberality is the difficulty of being fully possessed of the excellence of any opinion or pursuits of our own, without proportionably condemning whatever is opposed to it; nor can we admit the possibility that when our side of the shield is black, the other should be white. The largest part of our judgments is prompted by habit and passion; but because habit is like a second nature, and we necessarily approve what passion suggests, we will have it that they are founded entirely on reason and nature, and that all the world must be of the same opinion, unless they wilfully shut their eyes to the truth. Animals are free from prejudice, because they have no notion or care about anything beyond themselves, and have no wish to generalise or talk big on what does not concern them: man alone falls into absurdity and error by setting up a claim to superior wisdom and virtue, and to be a dictator and law-giver to all around him, and on all things that he has the remotest conception of. If mere prejudice were dumb, as well as deaf and blind, it would not so much signify; but as it is, each sect, age, country, profession, individual, is ready to prove that they are exclusively in the right, and to go together by the ears for it. 'Rings the earth with the vain stir?' It is the trick for each party to raise an outcry against prejudice; as by this they flatter themselves, and would have it supposed by others, that they are perfectly free from it, and have all the reason on their own side. It is easy indeed, to call names, or to separate the word *prejudice* from the word *reason*; but not so easy to separate the two things. Reason seems a very positive and palpable thing to those who have no notion of it but as expressing their own views and feelings; as prejudice is evidently a very gross and shocking absurdity (that no one can fall into who wishes to avoid it), as long as we

continue to apply this term to the prejudices of other people. To suppose that we cannot make a mistake is the very way to run headlong into it; for, if the distinction were so broad and glaring as our self-conceit and dogmatism lead us to imagine it is, we could never, but by design, mistake truth for falsehood. Those, however, who think they can *make a clear stage of it*, and frame a set of opinions on all subjects by an appeal to reason alone, and without the smallest intermixture of custom, imagination, or passion, know just as little of themselves as they do of human nature. The best way to prevent our running into the wildest excesses of prejudice and the most dangerous aberrations from reason, is, not to represent the two things as having a great gulph between them, which it is impossible to pass without a violent effort, but to show that we are constantly (even when we think ourselves most secure) treading on the brink of a precipice; that custom, passion, imagination, insinuate themselves into and influence almost every judgment we pass or sentiment we indulge, and are a necessary help (as well as hindrance) to the human understanding; and that, to attempt to refer every question to abstract truth and precise definition, without allowing for the frailty of prejudice, which is the unavoidable consequence of the frailty and imperfection of reason, would be to unravel the whole web and texture of human understanding and society. Such daring anatomists of morals and philosophy think that the whole beauty of the mind consists in the skeleton; cut away, without remorse, all sentiment, fancy, taste, as superfluous excrescences; and, in their own eager, unfeeling pursuit of scientific truth and elementary principles, they 'murder to dissect.' But of this I may say something in another paper.

## THE SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED

It is a mistake, however, to suppose that all prejudices are false, though it is not an easy matter to distinguish between true and false prejudice. Prejudice is properly an opinion or feeling, not for which there is no reason, but of which we cannot render a satisfactory account on the spot. It is not always possible to assign a 'reason for the faith that is in us,' not even if we take time and summon up all our strength; but it does not therefore follow that our faith is hollow and unfounded. A false impression may be defined to be an effect without a cause, or without any adequate one; but the effect may remain and be true, though the cause is concealed or forgotten. The grounds of our opinions and tastes may be deep, and be scattered

over a large surface; they may be various, remote and complicated, but the result will be sound and true, if they have existed at all, though we may not be able to analyse them into classes, or to recall the particular time, place, and circumstances of each individual case or branch of the evidence. The materials of thought and feeling, the body of facts and experience, are infinite, are constantly going on around us, and acting to produce an impression of good or evil, of assent or dissent to certain inferences; but to require that we should be prepared to retain the whole of this mass of experience in our memory, to resolve it into its component parts, and be able to quote chapter and verse for every conclusion we unavoidably draw from it, or else to discard the whole together as unworthy the attention of a rational being, is to betray an utter ignorance both of the limits and the several uses of the human capacity. The *feeling* of the truth of anything, or the soundness of the judgment formed upon it from repeated, actual impressions, is one thing: the power of vindicating and enforcing it, by distinctly appealing to or explaining those impressions, is another. The most fluent talkers or most plausible reasoners are not always the justest thinkers.

To deny that we can, in a certain sense, know and be justified in believing anything of which we cannot give the complete demonstration, or the exact *why* and *how*, would only be to deny that the clown, the mechanic (and not even the greatest philosopher), can know the commonest thing; for in this new and dogmatical process of reasoning, the greatest philosopher can trace nothing *above*, nor proceed a single step without taking something for granted;[1] and it is well if he does not take more things for granted than the most vulgar and illiterate, and what he knows a great deal less about. A common mechanic can tell how to work an engine better than the mathematician who invented it. A peasant is able to foretell rain from the appearance of the clouds, because (time out of mind) he has seen that appearance followed by that consequence; and shall a pedant catechise him out of a conviction which he has found true in innumerable instances, because he does not understand the composition of the elements, or cannot put his notions into a logical shape? There may also be some collateral circumstance (as the time of day), as well as the appearance of the clouds, which he may forget to state

[1] Berkeley, in his *Minute Philosopher*, attacks Dr. Halley, who had objected to faith and mysteries in religion, on this score; and contends that the mathematican, no less than the theologian, is obliged to presume on certain *postulates*, or to resort, before he could establish a single theorem, to a formal definition of those undefinable and hypothetical existences, points, lines, and surfaces; and, according to the ingenious and learned Bishop of Cloyne, *solids* would fare no better than *superficials* in this war of words and captious contradiction.

in accounting for his prediction; though, as it has been a part of his familiar experience, it has naturally guided him in forming it, whether he was aware of it or not. This comes under the head of the well-known principle of the *association of ideas*; by which certain impressions, from frequent recurrence, coalesce and act in unison truly and mechanically—that is, without our being conscious of anything but the general and settled result. On this principle it has been well said, that 'there is nothing so true as habit;' but it is also blind: we feel and can produce a given effect from numberless repetitions of the same cause; but we neither inquire into the cause, nor advert to the mode. In learning any art or exercise, we are obliged to take lessons, to watch others, to proceed step by step, to attend to the details and means employed; but when we are masters of it, we take all this for granted, and do it without labour and without thought, by a kind of habitual instinct—that is, by the trains of our ideas and volitions having been directed uniformly, and at last flowing of themselves into the proper channel.

We never do anything well till we cease to think about the manner of doing it. This is the reason why it is so difficult for any but natives to speak a language correctly or idiomatically. They do not succeed in this from knowledge or reflection, but from inveterate custom, which is a cord that cannot be loosed. In fact, in all that we do, feel, or think, there is a leaven of *prejudice* (more or less extensive), viz. something implied, of which we do not know or have forgotten the grounds.

If I am required to prove the possibility, or demonstrate the mode of whatever I do before I attempt it, I can neither speak, walk, nor see; nor have the use of my hands, senses, or common understanding. I do not know what muscles I use in walking, nor what organs I employ in speech: those who do, cannot speak or walk better on that account; nor can they tell how these organs and muscles themselves act. Can I not discover that one object is near, and another at a distance, from the *eye* alone, or from continual impressions of sense and custom concurring to make the distinction, without going through a course of perspective and optics?—or am I not to be allowed an opinion on the subject, or to act upon it, without being accused of being a very *prejudiced* and obstinate person? An artist knows that, to imitate an object in the horizon, he must use less colour; and the naturalist knows that this effect is produced by the intervention of a greater quantity of air: but a country fellow, who knows nothing of either circumstance, must not only be ignorant but a blockhead, if he could be persuaded that a hill ten miles off was close before him, only because he could not state the grounds of his

opinion scientifically. Not only must we (if restricted to reason and philosophy) distrust the notices of sense, but we must also dismiss all that mass of knowledge and perception which falls under the head of *common sense* and *natural feeling*, which is made up of the strong and urgent, but undefined impressions of things upon us, and lies between the two extremes of absolute proof and the grossest ignorance. Many of these pass for instinctive principles and *innate ideas*; but there is nothing in them 'more than natural.'

Without the aid of prejudice and custom, I should not be able to find my way across the room; nor know how to conduct myself in any circumstances, nor what to feel in any relation of life. Reason may play the critic, and correct certain errors afterwards; but if we were to wait for its formal and absolute decisions in the shifting and multifarious combinations of human affairs, the world would stand still. Even men of science, after they have gone over the proofs a number of times, abridge the process, and *jump at a conclusion*: is it therefore false, because they have always found it to be true? Science after a certain time becomes presumption; and learning reposes in ignorance. It has been observed, that women have more *tact* and insight into character than men, that they find out a pedant, a pretender, a blockhead, sooner. The explanation is, that they trust more to the first impressions and natural indications of things, without troubling themselves with a learned theory of them; whereas men, affecting greater gravity, and thinking themselves bound to justify their opinions, are afraid to form any judgment at all, without the formality of proofs and definitions, and blunt the edge of their understandings, lest they should commit some mistake. They stay for facts, till it is too late to pronounce on the characters. Women are naturally physiognomists, and men phrenologists. The first judge by sensations; the last by rules. Prejudice is so far then an involuntary and stubborn *association of ideas*, of which we cannot assign the distinct grounds and origin; and the answer to the question, 'How do we know whether the prejudice is true or false?' depends chiefly on that other, whether the first connection between our ideas has been real or imaginary. This again resolves into the inquiry—Whether the subject in dispute falls under the province of our own experience, feeling, and observation, or is referable to the head of authority, tradition, and fanciful conjecture? Our practical conclusions are in this respect generally right; our speculative opinions are just as likely to be wrong. What we derive from our personal acquaintance with things (however narrow in its scope or imperfectly digested), is, for the most part, built on a solid foundation—that of Nature; it is in trusting to others (who give themselves out for

guides and doctors) that we are *all abroad*, and at the mercy of quackery, impudence, and imposture. Any impression, however absurd, or however we may have imbibed it, by being repeated and indulged in, becomes an article of implicit and incorrigible belief. The point to consider is, how we have first taken it up, whether from ourselves or the arbitary dictation of others. 'Thus shall we try the doctrines, whether they be of nature or of man.'

So far then from the charge lying against vulgar and illiterate prejudice as the bane of truth and common sense, the argument turns the other way; for the greatest, the most solemn, and mischievous absurdities that mankind have been the dupes of, they have imbibed from the dogmatism and vanity or hypocrisy of the self-styled wise and learned, who have imposed profitable fictions upon them for self-evident truths, and contrived to enlarge their power with their pretensions to knowledge. Every boor sees that the sun shines above his head; that 'the moon is made of green cheese,' is a fable that has been taught him. Defoe says, that there were a hundred thousand stout country-fellows in his time ready to fight to the death against popery, without knowing whether popery was a man or a horse. This, then, was a prejudice that they did not fill up of their own heads. All the great points that men have founded a claim to superiority, wisdom, and illumination upon, that they have embroiled the world with, and made matters of the last importance, are what one age and country differ diametrically with each other about, have been successively and justly exploded, and have been the levers of opinion and the grounds of contention, precisely because, as their expounders and believers are equally in the dark about them, they rest wholly on the fluctuations of will and passion, and as they can neither be proved nor disproved, admit of the fiercest opposition or the most bigoted faith. In what 'comes home to the business and bosoms of men,' there is less of this uncertainty and presumption; and there, in the little world of our own knowledge and experience, we can hardly do better than attend to the 'still, small voice' of our own hearts and feelings, instead of being browbeat by the effrontery, or puzzled by the sneers and cavils of pedants and sophists, of whatever school or description.

If I take a prejudice against a person from his face, I shall very probably be in the right; if I take a prejudice against a person from hearsay, I shall quite as probably be in the wrong. We have a prejudice in favour of certain books, but it is hardly without knowledge, if we have read them with delight over and over again. Fame itself is a prejudice, though a fine one. Natural affection is a prejudice: for though we have cause to love our nearest connections better than

others, we have no reason to think them better than others. The error here is, when that which is properly a dictate of the heart passes out of its sphere, and becomes an overweening decision of the understanding. So in like manner of the love of country; and there is a prejudice in favour of virtue, genius, liberty, which (though it were possible) it would be a pity to destroy. The passions, such as avarice, ambition, love, &c., are prejudices, that is amply exaggerated views of certain objects, made up of habit and imagination beyond their real value; but if we ask what is the real value of any object, independently of its connection with the power of habit, or its affording natural scope for the imagination, we shall perhaps be puzzled for an answer. To reduce things to the scale of abstract reason would be to annihilate our interest in them, instead of raising our affections to a higher standard; and by striving to make man rational, we should leave him merely brutish.

Animals are without prejudice: they are not led away by authority or custom, but it is because they are gross, and incapable of being taught. It is, however, a mistake to imagine that only the vulgar and ignorant, who can give no account of their opinions, are the slaves of bigotry and prejudice; the noisiest declaimers, the most subtle casuists, and most irrefragable doctors, are as far removed from the character of true philosophers, while they strain and pervert all their powers to prove some unintelligible dogma, instilled into their mines by early education, interest, or self-importance; and if we say the peasant or artisan is a Mahometan because he is born in Turkey, or a papist because he is born in Italy, the mufti at Constantinople or the cardinal at Rome is so, for no better reason, in the midst of all his pride and learning. Mr. Hobbes used to say, that if he had read as much as others, he should have been as ignorant as they.

After all, most of our opinions are a mixture of reason and prejudice, experience and authority. We can only judge for ourselves in what concerns ourselves, and in things about us: and even there we must trust continually to established opinion and current report; in higher and more abstruse points we must pin our faith still more on others. If we believe only what we know at first hand, without trusting to authority at all, we shall disbelieve a great many things that really exist; and the suspicious coxcomb is as void of judgment as the credulous fool. My habitual conviction of the existence of such a place as Rome is not strengthened by my having seen it; it might be almost said to be obscured and weakened, as the reality falls short of the imagination. I walk along the streets without fearing that the houses will fall on my head, though I have not examined their foundation; and I believe firmly in the Newtonian system,

though I have never read the *Principia*. In the former case, I argue that if the houses were inclined to fall they would not wait for me; and in the latter I acquiesce in what all who have studied the subject, and are capable of understanding it, agree in, having no reason to suspect the contrary. That *the earth turns round* is agreeable to my understanding, though it shocks my sense, which is however too weak to grapple with so vast a question.

## ON PARTY SPIRIT

*The Atlas.*] [*April* 25, 1830.

Party spirit is one of the *profoundnesses of Satan*, or in more modern language, one of the dexterous *equivoques* and contrivances of our self-love, to prove that we, and those who agree with us, combine all that is excellent and praise-worthy in our own persons (as in a ring-fence) and that all the vices and deformity of human nature take refuge with those who differ from us. It is extending and fortifying the principle of the *amour-propre*, by calling to its aid the *esprit de corps* and screening and surrounding our favourite propensities and obstinate caprices in the hollow squares or dense phalanxes of sects and parties. This is a happy mode of pampering our self-complacency, and persuading ourselves that we and those that side with us, are 'the salt of the earth;' of giving vent to the morbid humours of our pride, envy, and all uncharitableness, those natural secretions of the human heart, under the pretext of self-defence, the public safety, or a voice from Heaven, as it may happen; and of heaping every excellence into one scale, and throwing all the obloquy and contempt into the other, in virtue of a nick-name, a watch-word of party, a badge, the colour of a ribbon, the cut of a dress. We thus desolate the globe, or tear a country in pieces, to show that we are the only people fit to live in it; and fancy ourselves angels, while we are playing the devil. In this manner, the Huron devours the Iroquois, because he is an Iroquois, and the Iroquois the Huron for a similar reason; neither suspects that he does it, because he himself is a savage and no better than a wild beast; and is convinced in his own breast that the difference of name and tribe makes a total difference in the case. The Papist persecutes the Protestant, the Protestant persecutes the Papist in his turn; and each fancies that he has a plenary right to do so, while he keeps in view only the offensive epithet which 'cuts the common link of brotherhood between them.' The church of England ill-treated the Dissenters, and the Dissenters, when they had the opportunity, did not spare the church of England. The Whig

calls the Tory a knave, the Tory compliments the Whig with the same title, and each thinks the abuse sticks to the party-name, and has nothing to do with himself or the generic name of *man*. On the contrary, it cuts both ways; but while the Whig says 'The Tory is a knave, because he is a Tory,' this is as much as to say, 'I cannot be a knave, because I am a Whig;' and by exaggerating the profligacy of his opponent, he imagines he is laying the sure foundation, and raising the lofty superstructure of his own praises. But if he says, which is the truth, 'The Tory is not a rascal because he is a Tory, but because human nature in power, and with the temptation, is a rascal,' then this would imply that the seeds of depravity are sown in his own bosom, and might shoot out into full growth and luxuriance if he got into place, which he does not wish to appear *till he does get into place*.

We may be intolerant even in advocating the cause of Toleration, and so bent on making proselytes to Free-thinking as to allow no one to think freely but ourselves. The most boundless liberality in appearance may amount in reality to the most monstrous ostracism of opinion —not in condemning this or that tenet, or standing up for this or that sect or party, but in assuming a supercilious superiority to all sects and parties alike, and proscribing in the lump and in one sweeping clause all arts, sciences, opinions, and pursuits but our own. Till the time of Locke and Toland a general toleration was never dreamt of: it was thought right on all hands to punish and discountenance heretics and schismatics, but each party alternately claimed to be true Christians and orthodox believers. Daniel Defoe, who spent his whole life, and wasted his strength in asserting the right of the Dissenters to a toleration (and got no thanks for it but the pillory), was scandalized at the proposal of the general principle, and was equally strenuous in excluding Quakers, Anabaptists, Socinians, Sceptics, and all who did not agree in the *essentials* of Christianity, that is, who did not agree with him, from the benefit of such an indulgence to tender consciences. We wonder at the cruelties formerly practised upon the Jews: is there anything wonderful in it? They were at the time the only people to make a butt and a bugbear of, to set up as a mark of indignity and as a foil to our self-love, for the *feræ naturæ* principle that is within us and always craving its prey to hunt down, to worry and make sport of at discretion, and without mercy—the unvarying uniformity and implicit faith of the Catholic church had imposed silence, and put a curb on our jarring dissensions, heart-burnings, and ill-blood, so that we had no pretence for quarrelling among ourselves for the glory of God or the salvation of men:—a JORDANUS BRUNO, an Atheist or sorcerer, once in a way, would hardly suffice to stay

the stomach of our theological rancour, we therefore fell with might and main upon the Jews as a *forlorn hope* in this dearth of objects of spite or zeal; or, as the whole of Europe was reconciled in the bosom of holy mother church, went to the holy land in search of a difference of opinion and a ground of mortal offence; but no sooner was there a division of the Christian world than Papist fell upon Protestant, Protestants upon schismatics, and schismatics upon one another, with the same loving fury as they had before fallen upon Turks and Jews. The disposition is always there, like a muzzled mastiff—the pretext only is wanting; and this is furnished by a name, which, as soon as it is affixed to different sects or parties, gives us a license, we think, to let loose upon them all our malevolence, domineering humour, love of power and wanton mischief, as if they were of different species. The sentiment of the pious English bishop was good, who, on seeing a criminal led to execution, exclaimed, 'There goes my wicked self!'

If we look at common patriotism, it will furnish an illustration of party-spirit. One would think by an Englishman's hatred of the French, and his readiness to die fighting with and for his countrymen, that all the nation were united as one man in heart and hand—and so they are in war-time—and as an exercise of their loyalty and courage; but let the crisis be over, and they cool wonderfully, begin to feel the distinctions of English, Irish, and Scotch, fall out among themselves upon some minor distinction; the same hand that was eager to shed the blood of a Frenchman will not give a crust of bread or a cup of cold water to a fellow-countryman in distress; and the heroes who defended the wooden walls of Old England are left to expose their wounds and crippled limbs to gain a pittance from the passenger, or to perish of hunger, cold, and neglect in our highways. Such is the effect of our boasted nationality: it is active, fierce in doing mischief; dormant, lukewarm in doing good. We may also see why the greatest stress is laid on trifles in religion, and why the most violent animosities arise out of the smallest differences in politics and religion. In the first place, it would never do to establish our superiority over others by the acquisition of greater virtues, or by discarding our vices; but it is charming to do this by merely repeating a different *formula* of prayer, or turning to the east instead of the west. He should fight boldly for such a distinction, who is persuaded it will furnish him with a passport to the other world, and entitle him to look down on the rest of his fellows as *given over to perdition*. Secondly, we often hate those most with whom we have only a slight shade of difference, whether in politics or religion; because as the whole in a contest for precedence and infallibility, we find it

more difficult to draw the line of distinction where so many points are conceded, and are staggered in our conviction by the arguments of those whom we cannot despise as totally and incorrigibly in the wrong. The high-church party in Queen Anne's time were disposed to sacrifice the low church and Dissenters to the Papists, because they were more galled by their arguments and disconcerted with their pretensions. In private life, the reverse of the foregoing reasoning holds good; that is, trades and professions present a direct contrast to sects and parties. A conformity in sentiment strengthens our party and opinion; but those who have a similarity of pursuit are rivals in interest; and hence the old maxim, that *two of a trade cannot agree.*

## PROJECT FOR A NEW THEORY OF CIVIL AND CRIMINAL LEGISLATION

When I was about fourteen (as long ago as the year 1792), in consequence of a dispute, one day after coming out of meeting, between my father and an old lady of the congregation, respecting the repeal of the Corporation and Test Acts and the limits of religious toleration, I set about forming in my head (the first time I ever attempted to think) the following system of political rights and general jurisprudence.

It was this circumstance that decided the fate of my future life; or rather, I would say it was from an original bias or craving to be satisfied of the reason of things, that I seized hold of this accidental opportunity to indulge in its uneasy and unconscious determination. Mr. Currie, my old tutor at Hackney, may still have the rough draught of this speculation, which I gave him with tears in my eyes, and which he good-naturedly accepted in lieu of the customary *themes*, and as a proof that I was no idler, but that my inability to produce a line on the ordinary school topics arose from my being involved in more difficult and abstruse matters. He must smile at the so oft-repeated charge against me of florid flippancy and tinsel. If from those briars I have since plucked roses, what labour has it not cost me? The Test and Corporation Acts were repealed the other day. How would my father have rejoiced if this had happened in his time, and in concert with his old friends Dr. Price, Dr. Priestley, and others! but now that there is no one to care about it, they give as a boon to indifference what they so long refused to justice, and thus ascribed by some to the liberality of the age! Spirit of contradiction! when wilt thou cease to rule over sublunary affairs, as the moon

governs the tides? Not till the unexpected stroke of a comet throws up a new breed of men and animals from the bowels of the earth; nor then neither, since it is included in the very idea of all life, power, and motion. *For* and *against* are inseparable terms. But not to wander any farther from the point—

I began with trying to define what a *right* meant; and this I settled with myself was not simply that which is good or useful in itself, but that which is thought so by the individual, and which has the sanction of his will as such. 1. Because the determining what is good in itself is an endless question. 2. Because one person's having a right to any good, and another being made the judge of it, leaves him without any security for its being exercised to his advantage, whereas self-love is a natural guarantee for our self-interest. 3. A thing being willed is the most absolute moral reason for its existence: that a thing is good in itself is no reason whatever why it should exist, till the will clothes it with a power to act as a motive; and there is certainly nothing to prevent this will from taking effect (no law or admitted plea above it) but another will opposed to it, and which forms a right on the same principle. A good is only so far a right, inasmuch as it virtually determines the will; for a *right* meant that which contains within itself, and as respects the bosom in which it is lodged, a cogent and unanswerable reason why it should exist. Suppose I have a violent aversion to one thing and as strong an attachment to something else, and that there is no other being in the world but myself, shall I not have a self-evident right, full title, liberty, to pursue the one and avoid the other? That is to say, in other words, there can be no authority to interpose between the strong natural tendency of the will and its desired effect, but the will of another. It may be replied that reason, that affection, may interpose between the will and the act; but there are motives that influence the conduct by first altering the will; and the point at issue is, that these being away, what other principle or lever is there always left to appeal to, before we come to blows? Now, such a principle is to be found in self-interest; and such a barrier against the violent will is erected by the limits which this principle necessarily sets to itself in the claims of different individuals. Thus, then, a right is not that which is right in itself, or best for the whole, or even for the individual, but that which is good in his own eyes, and according to his own will; and to which, among a number of equally selfish and self-willed beings, he can lay claim, allowing the same latitude and allowance to others. Political justice is that which assigns the limits of these individual rights in society, or it is the adjustment of force against force, of will against will, to prevent worse consequences. In the savage state there

is nothing but an appeal to brute force, or the right of the strongest; Politics lays down a rule to curb and measure out the wills of individuals in equal portions; Morals has a higher standard still, and ought never to appeal to force in any case whatever. Hence I always found something wanting in Mr. Godwin's *Enquiry concerning Political Justice* (which I read soon after with great avidity, and hoped, from its title and its vast reputation, to get entire satisfaction from it), for he makes no distinction between political justice, which implies an appeal to force, and moral justice, which implies only an appeal to reason. It is surely a distinct question, what you can persuade people to do by argument and fair discussion, and what you may lawfully compel them to do, when reason and remonstrance fail. But in Mr. Godwin's system the 'omnipotence of reason' supersedes the use of law and government, merges the imperfection of the means in the grandeur of the end, and leaves but one class of ideas or motives, the highest and the least attainable possible. So promises and oaths are said to be of no more value than common breath; nor would they, if every word we uttered was infallible and oracular, as if delivered from a Tripod. But this is pragmatical, and putting an imaginary for a real state of things. Again, right and duties, according to Mr. Godwin, are reciprocal. I could not comprehend this without an arbitrary definition that took away the meaning. In my sense, a man might have a right, a discriminating power, to do something, which others could not deprive him of, without a manifest infraction of certain rules laid down for the peace and order of society, but which it might be his duty to waive upon good reasons shown; rights are seconded by force, duties are things of choice. This is the import of the words in common speech: why then pass over this distinction in a work confessedly rhetorical as well as logical, that is, which laid an equal stress on sound and sense? Right, therefore, has a personal or selfish reference, as it is founded on the law which determines a man's actions in regard to his own being and well-being; and political justice is that which assigns the limits of these individual rights on their compatibility or incompatibility with each other in society. Right, in a word, is the duty which each man owes to himself; or it is that portion of the general good of which (as being principally interested) he is made the special judge, and which is put under his immediate keeping.

The next question I asked myself was, what is law and the real and necessary ground of civil government? The answer to this is found in the former statement. *Law* is something to abridge, or, more properly speaking, to ascertain, the bounds of the original right, and to coerce the will of individuals in the community. Whence,

then, has the community such a right? It can only arise in self-defence, or from the necessity of maintaining the equal rights of every one, and of opposing force to force in case of any violent and unwarrantable infringement of them. Society consists of a given number of individuals; and the aggregate right of government is only the consequence of these inherent rights, balancing and neutralising one another. How those who deny natural rights get at any sort of right, divine or human, I am at a loss to discover; for whatever exists in combination, exists beforehand in an elementary state. The world is composed of atoms, and a machine cannot be made without materials. First, then, it follows that law or government is not the mere creature of a social compact, since each person has a certain right which he is bound to defend against another without asking that other's leave, or else the right would always be at the mercy of whoever chose to invade it. There would be a right to do wrong, but none to resist it. Thus I have a natural right to defend my life against a murderer, without any mutual compact between us; hence society has an aggregate right of the same kind, and to make a law to that effect, forbidding and punishing murder. If there be no such immediate value and attachment to life felt by the individual, and a consequent justifiable determination to defend it, then the formal pretension of society to vindicate a right, which, according to this reasoning, has no existence in itself, must be founded on air, on a word, or a lawyer's *ipse dixit*. Secondly, society, or government, as such, has no right to trench upon the liberty or rights of the individuals its members, except as these last are, as it were, forfeited by interfering with and destroying one another, like opposite mechanical forces or quantities in arithmetic. Put the basis that each man's will is a sovereign law to itself: this can only hold in society as long as he does not meddle with others; but as long as he does not do this, the first principle retains its force, for there is no other principle to impeach or overrule it. The will of society is not a sufficient plea; since this is, or ought to be, made up of the wills or rights of the individuals composing it, which by the supposition remain entire, and consequently without power to act. The good of society is not a sufficient plea, for individuals are only bound (on compulsion) not to do it harm, or to be barely just: benevolence and virtue are voluntary qualities. For instance, if two persons are obliged to do all that is possible for the good of both, this must either be settled voluntarily between them, and then it is friendship, and not force; or if this is not the case, it is plain that one must be the slave, and lie at the caprice and mercy of the other: it will be one will forcibly regulating two bodies. But if each is left master of his own person and actions,

with only the implied proviso of not encroaching on those of the other, then both may continue free and independent, and contented in their several spheres. One individual has no right to interfere with the employment of my muscular powers, or to put violence on my person, to force me to contribute to the most laudable undertaking if I do not approve of it, any more than I have to force him to assist me in the direct contrary: if one has not, ten have not, nor a million, any such arbitrary right over me. What one can be *made* to do for a million is very trifling: what a million may do by being left free in all that merely concerns themselves, and not subject to the perpetual caprice and insolence of authority, and pretext of the public good, is a very different calculation. By giving up the principle of political independence, it is not the million that will govern the one, but the one that will in time give law to the million. There are some things that cannot be free in natural society, and against which there is a natural law; for instance, no one can be allowed to knock out another's brains or to fetter his limbs with impunity. And government is bound to prevent the same violations of liberty and justice. The question is, whether it would not be possible for a government to exist, and for a system of laws to be framed, that confined itself to the punishment of such offences, and left all the rest (except the suppression of force by force) optional or matter of mutual compact. What are a man's natural rights? Those, the infringement of which cannot on any supposition go unpunished: by leaving all but cases of necessity to choice and reason, much would be perhaps gained, and nothing lost.

Corollary 1. It results from the foregoing statement, that there is nothing naturally to restrain or oppose the will of one man, but the will of another meeting it. Thus, in a desert island, it is evident that my will and rights would be absolute and unlimited, and I might say with Robinson Crusoe, 'I am monarch of all I survey.'

Corollary 2. It is coming into society that circumscribes my will and rights, by establishing equal and mutual rights, instead of the original uncircumscribed ones. They are still 'founded as the rock,' though not so broad and general as the casing air, for the only thing that limits them is the solidity of another right, no better than my own, and, like stones in a building, or a mosaic pavement, each remains not the less firmly riveted to its place, though it cannot encroach upon the next to it. I do not belong to the state, nor am I a nonentity in it, but I am one part of it, and independent in it, for that very reason that every one in it is independent of me. Equality, instead of being destroyed by society, results from and is improved by it; for in politics, as in physics, the action and reaction are the same:

the right of resistance on their part implies the right of self-defence on mine. In a theatre, each person has a right to his own seat, by the supposition that he has no right to intrude into any one else's. They are convertible propositions. Away, then, with the notion that liberty and equality are inconsistent. But here is the artifice: by merging the rights and independence of the individual in the fictitious order of society, those rights become arbitrary, capricious, equivocal, removable at the pleasure of the state or ruling power; there is nothing substantial or durable implied in them: if each has no positive claim, naturally, those of all taken together can mount up to nothing; right and justice are mere blanks to be filled up with arbitrary will, and the people have thenceforward no defence against the government. On the other hand, suppose these rights to be not empty names or artificial arrangements, but original and inherent like solid atoms, then it is not in the power of government to annihilate one of them, whatever may be the confusion arising from their struggle for mastery, or before they can settle into order and harmony. Mr. Burke talks of the reflections and refractions of the rays of light as altering their primary essence and direction. But if there were no original rays of light, there could be neither refraction, nor reflections. Why, then, does he try by cloudy sophistry to blot the sun out of heaven? One body impinges against and impedes another in the fall, but it could not do this, but for the principle of gravity. The author of the *Sublime and Beautiful* would have a single atom outweigh the great globe itself; or an empty title, a bloated privilege, or a grievous wrong overturn the entire mass of truth and justice. The question between the author and his opponents appears to be simply this: whether politics, or the general good, is an affair of reason or imagination! and this seems decided by another consideration, viz., that Imagination is the judge of individual things, and Reason of generals. Hence the great importance of the principle of universal suffrage; for if the vote and choice of a single individual goes for nothing, so, by parity of reasoning, may that of all the rest of the community: but if the choice of every man in the community is held sacred, then what must be the weight and value of the whole.

Many persons object that by this means property is not represented, and so, to avoid that, they would have nothing but property represented, at the same time that they pretend that if the elective franchise were thrown open to the poor, they would be wholly at the command of the rich, to the prejudice and exclusion of the middle and independent classes of society. Property always has a natural influence and authority; it is only people without property that have no natural protection, and require every artificial and legal one. *Those that have*

*much, shall have none ; and those that have little, shall have less.* This proverb is no less true in public than in private life. The *better orders* (as they are called, and who, in virtue of this title, would assume a monopoly in the direction of state affairs) are merely and in plain English those who are *better off* than others; and as they get the wished-for monopoly into their hands, others will be uniformly *worse off*, and will sink lower and lower in the scale; so that it is essentially requisite to extend the elective franchise in order to counteract the excess of the great and increasing goodness of the better orders to themselves. I see no reason to suppose that in any case popular feeling (if free course were given to it) would bear down public opinion. Literature is at present pretty nearly on the footing of universal suffrage, yet the public defer sufficiently to the critics; and when no party bias interferes, and the government do not make a point of running a writer down, the verdict is tolerably fair and just. I do not say that the result might not be equally satisfactory, when literature was patronised more immediately by the great; but then lords and ladies had no interest in praising a bad piece and condemning a good one. If they could have laid a tax on the town for not going to it, they would have run a bad play forty nights together, or the whole year round, without scruple. As things stand, the worse the law, the better for the lawmakers: it takes everything from others to give it to *them*. It is common to insist on universal suffrage and the ballot together. But if the first were allowed, the second would be unnecessary. The ballot is only useful as a screen from arbitrary power. There is nothing manly or independent to recommend it.

Corollary 3. If I was out at sea in a boat with a *jure divino* monarch, and he wanted to throw me overboard, I would not let him. No gentleman would ask such a thing, no freeman would submit to it. Has he, then, a right to dispose of the lives and liberties of thirty millions of men? Or have they more right than I have to resist his demands? They have thirty millions of times that right, if they had a particle of the same spirit that I have. It is not the individual, then, whom in this case I fear (to me 'there 's *no* divinity doth hedge a king'), but thirty millions of his subjects that call me to account in his name, and who are of a most approved and indisputable loyalty, and who have both the right and power. The power rests with the multitude, but let them beware how the exercise of it turns against their own rights! It is not the idol but the worshippers that are to be dreaded, and who, by degrading one of their fellows, render themselves liable to be branded with the same indignities.

Corollary 4. No one can be born a slave; for my limbs are my own, and the power and the will to use them are anterior to all laws,

and independent of the control of every other person. No one acquires a right over another but that other acquires some reciprocal right over him; therefore the relation of master and slave is a contradiction in political logic. Hence, also, it follows that combinations among labourers for the rise of wages are always just and lawful, as much as those among master manufacturers to keep them down. A man's labour is his own, at least as much as another's goods; and he may starve if he pleases, but he may refuse to work except on his own terms. The right of property is reducible to this simple principle, that one man has not a right to the produce of another's labour, but each man has a right to the benefit of his own exertions and the use of his natural and inalienable powers, unless for a supposed equivalent and by mutual consent. Personal liberty and property therefore rest upon the same foundation. I am glad to see that Mr. Macculloch, in his *Essay on Wages*, admits the right of combination among journeymen and others. I laboured this point hard, and, I think, satisfactorily, a good while ago, in my *Reply to Mr. Malthus*. 'Throw your bread upon the waters, and after many days you shall find it again.'

There are four things that a man may especially call his own. 1. His person. 2. His actions. 3. His property. 4. His opinions. Let us see how each of these claims unavoidably circumscribes and modifies those of others, on the principle of abstract equity and necessity and independence above laid down.

First, as to the Rights of Persons. My intention is to show that the right of society to make laws to coerce the will of others, is founded on the necessity of repelling the wanton encroachment of that will on their rights; that is, strictly on the right of self-defence or resistance to aggression. Society comes forward and says, 'Let us alone, and we will let you alone, otherwise we must see which is strongest;' its object is not to patronise or advise individuals for their good, and against their will, but to protect itself: meddling with others forcibly on any other plea or for any other purpose is impertinence. But equal rights destroy one another; nor can there be a right to impossible or impracticable things. Let A, B, C, D, &c., be different component parts of any society, each claiming to be the centre and master of a certain sphere of activity and self-determination: as long as each keeps within his own line of demarcation there is no harm done, nor any penalty incurred—it is only the superfluous and overbearing will of particular persons that must be restrained or lopped off by the axe of the law. Let A be the culprit; B, C, D, &c., or the rest of the community, are plaintiffs against A, and wish to prevent his taking any unfair or unwarranted advantage over them.

They set up no pretence to dictate or domineer over him, but merely to hinder his dictating to and domineering over them; and in this, having both might and right on their side, they have no difficulty in putting it in execution. Every man's independence and discretionary power over what peculiarly and exclusively concerns himself, is his *castle* (whether round, square, or, according to Mr. Owen's new map of improvements, in the form of a parallelogram). As long as he keeps within this, he is safe—society has no hold of him: it is when he quits it to attack his neighbours that they resort to reprisals, and make short work of the interloper. It is, however, time to endeavour to point out in what this natural division of right, and separate advantage consists. In the first place, A, B, C, D have the common and natural rights of persons, in so far that none of these has a right to offer violence to, or cause bodily pain or injury to any of the others. Sophists laugh at natural rights: they might as well deny that we have natural persons; for while the last distinction holds true and good by the constitution of things, certain consequences must and will follow from it—'while this machine is to us Hamlet,' &c. For instance, I should like to know whether Mr. Burke, with his *Sublime and Beautiful* fancies, would deny that each person has a particular body and senses belonging to him, so that he feels a peculiar and natural interest in whatever affects these more than another can, and whether such a peculiar and paramount interest does not imply a direct and unavoidable right in maintaining this circle of individuality inviolate. To argue otherwise is to assert that indifference, or that which does not feel either the good or the ill, is as capable a judge and zealous a discriminator of right and wrong as that which does. The right, then, is coeval and co-extended with the interest, not a product of convention, but inseparable from the order of the universe; the doctrine itself is natural and solid; it is the contrary fallacy that is made of air and words. Mr. Burke, in such a question, was like a man out at sea in a haze, and could never tell the difference between land and clouds. If another break my arm by violence, this will not certainly give him additional health or strength; if he stun me by a blow or inflict torture on my limbs, it is I who feel the pain, and not he; and it is hard if I, who am the sufferer, am not allowed to be the judge. That another should pretend to deprive me of it, or pretend to judge for me, and set up his will against mine, in what concerns this portion of my existence—where I have all at stake and he nothing—is not merely injustice but impudence. The circle of personal security and right, then, is not an imaginary and arbitrary line fixed by law and the will of the prince, or the scaly finger of Mr. Hobbes's *Leviathan*, but is real and inherent in the nature of

things, and itself the foundation of law and justice. 'Hands off is fair play'—according to the old adage. One, therefore, has not a right to lay violent hands on another, or to infringe on the sphere of his personal identity; one must not run foul of another, or he is liable to be repelled and punished for the offence. If you meet an Englishman suddenly in the street, he will run up against you sooner than get out of your way, which last he thinks a compromise of his dignity and a relinquishment of his purpose, though he expects you to get out of his. A Frenchman in the same circumstances will come up close to you, and try to walk over you, as if there was no one in his way; but if you take no notice of him, he will step on one side, and make you a low bow. The one is a fellow of stubborn will, the other a *petit maître*. An Englishman at a play mounts upon a bench, and refuses to get down at the request of another, who threatens to call him to account the next day. 'Yes,' is the answer of the first, 'if your master will let you!' His abuse of liberty, he thinks, is justified by the other's want of it. All an Englishman's ideas are modifications of his will; which shows, in one way, that right is founded on will, since the English are at once the freest and most wilful of all people. If you meet another on the ridge of a precipice, are you to throw each other down? Certainly not. You are to pass as well as you can. 'Give and take,' is the rule of natural right, where the right is not all on one side and cannot be claimed entire. Equal weights and scales produce a balance, as much as where the scales are empty: so it does not follow (as our votaries of absolute power would insinuate) that one man's right is nothing because another's is something. But suppose there is not time to pass, and one or other must perish, in the case just mentioned, then each must do the best for himself that he can, and the instinct of self-preservation prevails over everything else. In the streets of London, the passengers take the right hand of one another and the wall alternately; he who should not conform to this rule would be guilty of a breach of the peace. But if a house were falling, or a mad ox driven furiously by, the rule would be, of course, suspended, because the case would be out of the ordinary. Yet I think I can conceive, and have even known, persons capable of carrying the point of gallantry in political right to such a pitch as to refuse to take a precedence which did not belong to them in the most perilous circumstances, just as a soldier may waive a right to quit his post, and takes his turn in battle. The actual collision or case of personal assault and battery, is, then, clearly prohibited, inasmuch as each person's body is clearly defined: but how if A use other means of annoyance against B, such as a sword or poison, or resort to what causes other painful sensations besides tangible ones, for instance,

certain disagreeable sounds and smells? Or, if these are included as a violation of personal rights, then how draw the line between them and the employing certain offensive words and gestures or uttering opinions which I disapprove? This is a puzzler for the dogmatic school; but they solve the whole difficulty by an assumption of *utility*, which is as much as to tell a person that the way to any place to which he asks a direction is 'to follow his nose.' We want to know by given marks and rules what is best and useful; and they assure us very wisely, that this is infallibly and clearly determined by what *is* best and useful. Let us try something else. It seems no less necessary to erect certain little *fortalices*, with palisades and outworks about them, for RIGHT to establish and maintain itself in, than as landmarks to guide us across the wide waste of UTILITY. If a person runs a sword through me, or administers poison, or procures it to be administered, the effect, the pain, disease or death is the same, and I have the same right to prevent it, on the principle that I am the sufferer; that the injury is offered to me, and he is no gainer by it, except for mere malice or caprice, and I therefore remain master and judge of my own remedy, as in the former case; the principle and definition of right being to secure to each individual the determination and protection of that portion of sensation in which he has the greatest, if not a sole interest, and, as it were, identity with it. Again, as to what are called *nuisances*, to wit offensive smells, sounds, &c., it is more difficult to determine on the ground that *one man's meat is another man's poison*. I remember a case occurred in the neighbourhood where I was, and at the time I was trying my best at this question, which puzzled me a good deal. A rector of a little town in Shropshire, who was at variance with all his parishioners, had conceived a particular spite to a lawyer who lived next door to him, and as a means of annoying him, used to get together all sorts of rubbish, weeds, and unsavoury materials, and set them on fire, so that the smoke should blow over into his neighbour's garden; whenever the wind set in that direction, he said, as a signal to his gardener, 'It 's a fine Wicksteed wind to-day;' and the operation commenced. Was this an action of assault and battery, or not? I think it was, for this reason, that the offence was unequivocal, and that the only motive for the proceeding was the giving this offence. The assailant would not like to be served so himself. Mr. Bentham would say, the malice of the motive was a set-off to the injury. I shall leave that *prima philosophia* consideration out of the question. A man who knocks out another's brains with a bludgeon may say it pleases him to do so; but will it please him to have the compliment returned? If he still persists, in spite of this punishment, there is no preventing him; but

if not, then it is a proof that he thinks the pleasure less than the pain to himself, and consequently to another in the scales of justice. The *lex talionis* is an excellent test. Suppose a third person (the physician of the place) had said, 'It is a fine Egerton wind to-day,' our rector would have been non-plussed; for he would have found that, as he suffered all the hardship, he had the right to complain of and to resist an action of another, the consequences of which affected principally himself. Now mark: if he had himself had any advantage to derive from the action, which he could not obtain in any other way, then he would feel that his neighbour also had the same plea and right to follow his own course (still this might be a doubtful point); but in the other case it would be sheer malice and wanton interference; that is, not the exercise of a right, but the invasion of another's comfort and independence. Has a person, then, a right to play on the horn or on a flute, on the same staircase? I say, yes; because it is for his own improvement and pleasure, and not to annoy another; and because, accordingly, every one in his own case would wish to reserve this or a similar privilege to himself. I do not think a person has a right to beat a drum under one's window, because this is altogether disagreeable, and if there is any extraordinary motive for it, then it is fit that the person should be put to some little inconvenience in removing his sphere of liberty of action to a reasonable distance. A tallow-chandler's shop or a steam-engine is a nuisance in a town, and ought to be removed into the suburbs; but they are to be tolerated where they are least inconvenient, because they are necessary somewhere, and there is no remedying the inconvenience. The right to protest against and to prohibit them rests with the suffering party; but because this point of the greatest interest is less clear in some cases than in others, it does not follow that there is no right or principle of justice in the case. 3. As to matters of contempt and the expression of opinion, I think these do not fall under the head of force, and are not, on that ground, subjects of coercion and law. For example, if a person inflicts a sensation upon me by material means, whether tangible or otherwise, I cannot help that sensation; I am so far the slave of that other, and have no means of resisting him but by force, which I would define to be material agency. But if another proposes an opinion to me, I am not bound to be of this opinion; my judgment and will is left free, and therefore I have no right to resort to force to recover a liberty which I have not lost. If I do this to prevent that other from pressing that opinion, it is I who invade his liberty, without warrant, because without necessity. It may be urged that material agency, or force, is used in the adoption of sounds or letters of the alphabet, which I cannot help seeing

or hearing. But the injury is not here, but in the moral and artificial inference, which I am at liberty to admit or reject, according to the evidence. There is no force but argument in the case, and it is reason, not the will of another, that gives the law. Further, the opinion expressed, generally concerns not one individual, but the general interest; and of that my approbation or disapprobation is not a commensurate or the sole judge. I am judge of my own interests, because it is my affair, and no one's else; but by the same rule, I am not judge, nor have I a *veto* on that which appeals to all the world, merely because I have a prejudice or fancy against it. But suppose another expresses by signs or words a contempt for me? *Answer.* I do not know that he is bound to have a respect for me. Opinion is free; for if I wish him to have that respect, then he must be left free to judge for himself, and consequently to arrive at and to express the contrary opinion, or otherwise the verdict and testimony I aim at could not be obtained; just as players must consent to be hissed, if they expect to be applauded. Opinion cannot be forced, for it is not grounded on force, but on evidence and reason, and therefore these last are the proper instruments to control that opinion, and to make it favourable to what we wish, or hostile to what we disapprove. In what relates to action, the will of another is force, or the determining power: in what relates to opinion, the mere will or *ipse dixit* of another is of no avail but as it gains over other opinions to its side, and therefore neither needs nor admits of force as a counteracting means to be used against it. But in the case of calumny or indecency: 1. I would say that it is the suppression of truth that gives falsehood its worst edge. What transpires (however maliciously or secretly) in spite of the law, is taken for gospel, and as it is impossible to prevent calumny, so it is impossible to counteract it on the present system, or while every attempt to answer it is attributed to the people's not daring to speak the truth. If any single fact or accident peeps out, the whole character, having this legal screen before it, is supposed to be of a piece; and the world, defrauded of the means of coming to their own conclusion, naturally infer the worst. Hence the saying, that reputation once gone never returns. If, however, we grant the general license or liberty of the press, in a scheme where publicity is the great object, it seems a manifest *contre-sens* that the author should be the only thing screened or kept a secret: either, therefore, an anonymous libeller would be heard with contempt, or if he signed his name thus—, or thus — —, it would be equivalent to being branded publicly as a calumniator, or marked with the T. F. (*travail forcé*) or the broad R. (rogue) on his back. These are thought sufficient punishments, and yet they rest on opinion without stripes or

labour. As to indecency, in proportion as it is flagrant is the shock and resentment against it; and as vanity is the source of indecency, so the universal discountenance and shame is its most effectual antidote. If it is public, it produces immediate reprisals from public opinion which no brow can stand; and if secret, it had better be left so. No one can then say it is obtruded on him; and if he will go in search of it, it seems odd he should call upon the law to frustrate the object of his pursuit. Further, at the worst, society has its remedy in its own hands whenever its moral sense is outraged, that is, it may send to Coventry, or excommunicate like the church of old; for though it may have no right to prosecute, it is not bound to protect or patronise, unless by voluntary consent of all parties concerned. Secondly, as to rights of action, or personal liberty. These have no limit but the rights of persons or property aforesaid, or to be hereafter named. They are the channels in which the others run without injury and without impediment, as a river within its banks. Every one has a right to use his natural powers in the way most agreeable to himself, and which he deems most conducive to his own advantage, provided he does not interfere with the corresponding rights and liberties of others. He has no right to coerce them by a decision of his individual will, and as long as he abstains from this he has no right to be coerced by an expression of the aggregate will, that is, by law. The law is the emanation of the aggregate will, and this will receives its warrant to act only from the forcible pressure from without, and its indispensable resistance to it. Let us see how this will operate to the pruning and curtailment of law. The rage of legislation is the first vice of society; it ends by limiting it to as few things as possible. 1. There can, according to the principle here imperfectly sketched, be no laws for the enforcement of morals; because morals have to do with the will and affections, and the law only puts a restraint on these. Every one is politically constituted the judge of what is best for himself; it is only when he encroaches on others that he can be called to account. He has no right to say to others, You shall do as I do; how then should they have a right to say to him, You shall do as we do? Mere numbers do not convey the right, for the law addresses not one, but the whole community. For example, there cannot rightly be a law to set a man in the stocks for getting drunk. It injures his health, you say. That is his concern, and not mine. But it is detrimental to his affairs; if so, he suffers most by it. But it is ruinous to his wife and family: he is their natural and legal guardian. But they are thrown upon the parish: the parish need not take the burden upon itself, unless it chooses or has agreed to do so. If a man is not kind to or fond of his wife I see no law to make him. If he beats her, or threatens her life, she as clearly has a right to call in the

aid of a constable or justice of peace. I do not see, in like manner, how there can be law against gambling (against cheating there may), nor against usury. A man gives twenty, forty, a hundred per cent. with his eyes open, but would he do it if strong necessity did not impel him? Certainly no man would give double if he could get the same advantage for half. There are circumstances in which a rope to save me from drowning, or a draught of water, would be worth all I have. In like manner, lotteries are fair things; for the loss is inconsiderable, and the advantage may be incalculable. I do not believe the poor put into them, but the reduced rich, the *shabby-genteel*. Players were formerly prohibited as a nuisance, and fortune-tellers still are liable to the Vagrant Act, which the parson of the parish duly enforces, in his zeal to prevent cheating and imposture, while he himself has his two livings, and carries off a tenth of the produce of the soil. Rape is an offence clearly punishable by law; but I would not say that simple incontinence is so. I will give one more example, which, though quaint, may explain the distinction I aim at. A man may commit suicide if he pleases, without being responsible to any one. He may quit the world as he would quit the country where he was born. But if any person were to fling himself from the gallery into the pit of a playhouse, so as to endanger the lives of others, if he did not succeed in killing himself, he would render himself liable to punishment for the attempt, if it were to be supposed that a person so desperately situated would care about consequences. Duelling is lawful on the same principle, where every precaution is taken to show that the act is voluntary and fair on both sides. I might give other instances, but these will suffice. 2. There should be a perfect toleration in matters of religion. In what relates to the salvation of a man's soul, he is infinitely more concerned than I can be; and to pretend to dictate to him in this particular is an infinite piece of impertinence and presumption. But if a man has no religion at all? That does not hinder me from having any. If he stood at the church door and would not let me enter, I should have a right to push him aside; but if he lets me pass by without interruption, I have no right to turn back and drag him in after me. He might as well force me to have no religion as I force him to have one, or burn me at a stake for believing what he does not. Opinion, 'like the wild goose, flies unclaimed of any man:' heaven is like 'the marble air, accessible to all;' and therefore there is no occasion to trip up one another's heels on the road, or to erect a turnpike gate to collect large sums from the passengers. How have I a right to make another pay for the saving of my soul, or to assist me in damning his? There should be no secular interference in sacred things; no laws to suppress or establish any church or sect in religion, no religious persecutions, tests, or

disqualifications; the different sects should be left to inveigle and hate each other as much as they please; but without the love of exclusive domination and spiritual power there would be little temptation to bigotry and intolerance.

3. As to the Rights of Property. It is of no use a man's being left to enjoy security, or to exercise his freedom of action, unless he has a right to appropriate certain other things necessary to his comfort and subsistence to his own use. In a state of nature, or rather of solitary independence, he has a right to all he can lay his hands on: what then limits this right? Its being inconsistent with the same right in others. This strikes a mathematical or logical balance between two extreme and equal pretensions. As there is not a natural and indissoluble connection between the individual and his property, or those outward objects of which he may have need (they being detached, unlimited, and transferable), as there is between the individual and his person, either as an organ of sensation or action, it is necessary, in order to prevent endless debate and quarrels, to fix upon some other criterion or common ground of preference. Animals, or savages, have no idea of any other right than that of the strongest, and seize on all they can get by force, without any regard to justice or an equal claim. 1. One mode of settling the point is to divide the spoil. That is allowing an equal advantage to both. Thus boys, when they unexpectedly find anything, are accustomed to cry '*Halves*!' But this is liable to other difficulties, and applies only to the case of joint finding. 2. Priority of possession is a fair way of deciding the right of property; first, on the mere principle of a lottery, or the old saying, '*First come, first served*;' secondly, because the expectation having been excited, and the will more set upon it, this constitutes a powerful reason for not violently forcing it to let go its hold. The greater strength of volition is, we have seen, one foundation of right; for supposing a person to be absolutely indifferent to anything, he could properly set up no claim to it. 3. Labour, or the having produced a thing or fitted it for use by previous exertion, gives this right, chiefly, indeed, for moral and final causes; because if one enjoyed what another had produced, there would be nothing but idleness and rapacity; but also in the sense we are inquiring into, because on a merely selfish ground the labour undergone, or the time lost, is entitled to an equivalent, *cæteris manentibus*. 4. If another, voluntarily, or for a consideration, resigns to me his right in anything, it to all intents and purposes becomes mine. This accounts not only for gifts, the transfer of property by bargains, &c., but for legacies and the transmission of property in families or otherwise. It is hard to make a law to circumscribe this right of disposing of what we have as we

please; yet the boasted law of primogeniture, which is professedly the bulwark and guardian of property is in direct violation of this principle. 5, and lastly. Where a thing is common, and there is enough for all, and no one contributes to it, as air or water, there can be no property in it. The proximity to a herring-fishery, or the having been the first to establish a particular traffic in such commodities, may perhaps give this right by aggravating our will, as having a nearer or longer power over them; but the rule is the other way. It is on same principle that poaching is a kind of honest thieving, for that which costs no trouble and is confined to no limits seems to belong to no one exclusively (why else do poachers or country people seize on this kind of property with the least reluctance, but that it is the least like stealing?); and as the game laws and the tenaciousness of the rights to that which has least the character of property, as most a point of honour, produced a revolution in one country, so they are not unlikely to produce it in another. The object and principle of the laws of property, then, is this: 1. To supply individuals and the community with what they need. 2. To secure an equal share to each individual, other circumstances being the same. 3. To keep the peace and promote industry and plenty, by proportioning each man's share to his own exertions, or to the good-will and discretion of others. The intention, then, being that no individual should rob another, or be starved but by his refusing to work (the earth and its produce being the natural estate of the community, subject to these regulations of individual right and public welfare), the question is, whether any individual can have a right to rob or starve the whole community: or if the necessary discretion left in the application of the principle has led to a state of things subversive of the principle itself, and destructive to the welfare and existence of the state, whether the end being defeated, the law does not fall to the ground, or require either a powerful corrective or a total reconstruction. The end is superior to the means, and the use of a thing does not justify its abuse. If a clock is quite out of order and always goes wrong, it is no argument to say it was set right at first and on true mechanical principles, and therefore it must go on as it has done, according to all the rules of art; on the contrary, it is taken to pieces, repaired, and the whole restored to the original state, or, if this is impossible, a new one is made. So society, when out of order, which it is whenever the interests of the many are regularly and outrageously sacrificed to those of the few, must be repaired, and either a reform or a revolution cleanse its corruptions and renew its elasticity. People talk of the poor laws as a grievance. Either they or a national bankruptcy, or a revolution, are necessary. The labour-

ing population have not doubled in the last forty years; there are still no more than are necessary to do the work in husbandry, &c., that is indispensably required; but the wages of a labouring man are no higher than they were forty years ago, and the price of food and necessaries is at least double what it was then, owing to taxes, grants, monopolies, and immense fortunes gathered during the war by the richer or more prosperous classes, who have not ceased to propagate in the geometrical ratio, though the poor have not done it, and the maintaining of whose younger and increasing branches in becoming splendour and affluence presses with double weight on the poor and labouring classes. The greater part of a community ought not to be paupers or starving; and when a government by obstinacy and madness has reduced them to that state, it must either take wise and effectual measures to relieve them from it, or pay the forfeit of its own wickedness and folly.

It seems, then, that a system of just and useful laws may be constructed nearly, if not wholly, on the principle of the right of self-defence, or the security for person, liberty, and property. There are exceptions, such, for instance, as in the case of children, idiots, and insane persons. These common-sense dictates for a general principle can only hold good where the general conditions are complied with. There are also mixed cases, partaking of civil and moral justice. Is a man bound to support his children? Not in strict political right; but he may be compelled to forego all the benefits of civil society, if he does not fulfil an engagement which, according to the feelings and principles of that society, he has undertaken. So in respect to marriage. It is a voluntary contract, and the violation of it is punishable on the same plea of sympathy and custom. Government is not necessarily founded on common consent, but on the right which society has to defend itself against all aggression. But am I bound to pay or support the government for defending the society against any violence or injustice? No: but then they may withdraw the protection of the law from me if I refuse, and it is on this ground that the contributions of each individual to the maintenance of the state are demanded. Laws are, or ought to be, founded on the supposed infraction of individual rights. If these rights, and the best means of maintaining them, are always clear, and there could be no injustice or abuse of power on the part of the government, every government might be its own lawgiver: but as neither of these is the case, it is necessary to recur to the general voice for settling the boundaries of right and wrong, and even more for preventing the government, under pretence of the general peace and safety, from subjecting the whole liberties, rights, and resources of the community to its own advantage and sole will.

## ON THE CONDUCT OF LIFE; OR, ADVICE TO A SCHOOLBOY

My dear little Fellow,—You are now going to settle at school, and may consider this as your first entrance into the world. As my health is so indifferent, and I may not be with you long, I wish to leave you some advice (the best I can) for your conduct in life, both that it may be of use to you, and as something to remember me by. I may at least be able to caution you against my own errors, if nothing else.

As we went along to your new place of destination, you often repeated that 'You durst say they were a set of stupid, disagreeable people,' meaning the people at the school. You were to blame in this. It is a good old rule to hope for the best. Always, my dear, believe things to be right, till you find them the contrary; and even then, instead of irritating yourself against them, endeavour to put up with them as well as you can, if you cannot alter them. You said 'You were sure you should not like the school where you were going.' This was wrong. What you meant was that you did not like to leave home. But you could not tell whether you should like the school or not, till you had given it a trial. Otherwise, your saying that you should not like it was determining that you would not like it. Never anticipate evils; or, because you cannot have things exactly as you wish, make them out worse than they are, through mere spite and wilfulness.

You seemed at first to take no notice of your school-fellows, or rather to set yourself against them, because they were strangers to you. They knew as little of you as you did of them; so that this would have been a reason for their keeping aloof from you as well, which you would have felt as a hardship. Learn never to conceive a prejudice against others, because you know nothing of them. It is bad reasoning, and makes enemies of half the world. Do not think ill of them, till they behave ill to you; and then strive to avoid the faults which you see in them. This will disarm their hostility sooner than pique or resentment or complaint.

I thought you were disposed to criticise the dress of some of the boys as not so good as your own. Never despise any one for any thing that he cannot help—least of all, for his poverty. I would wish you to keep up appearances yourself as a defence against the idle sneers of the world, but I would not have you value yourself upon them. I hope you will neither be the dupe nor victim of vulgar prejudices. Instead of saying above—'Never despise any one for

any thing that he cannot help'—I might have said, 'Never despise any one at all;' for contempt implies a triumph over and pleasure in the ill of another. It means that you are glad and congratulate yourself on their failings or misfortunes. The sense of inferiority in others, without this indirect appeal to our self-love, is a painful feeling, and not an exulting one.

You complain since, that the boys laugh at you and do not care about you, and that you are not treated as you were at home. My dear, that is one chief reason for your being sent to school, to inure you betimes to the unavoidable rubs and uncertain reception you may meet with in life. You cannot always be with me, and perhaps it is as well that you cannot. But you must not expect others to show the same concern about you as I should. You have hitherto been a spoiled child, and have been used to have your own way a good deal, both in the house and among your play-fellows, with whom you were too fond of being a leader: but you have good-nature and good sense, and will get the better of this in time. You have now got among other boys who are your equals, or bigger and stronger than yourself, and who have something else to attend to besides humouring your whims and fancies, and you feel this as a repulse or piece of injustice. But the first lesson to learn is that there are other people in the world besides yourself. There are a number of boys in the school where you are, whose amusements and pursuits (whatever they may be) are and ought to be of as much consequence to them as yours can be to you, and to which therefore you must give way in your turn. The more airs of childish self-importance you give yourself, you will only expose yourself to be the more thwarted and laughed at. True equality is the only true morality or true wisdom. Remember always that you are but one among others, and you can hardly mistake your place in society. In your father's house, you might do as you pleased: in the world, you will find competitors at every turn. You are not born a king's son to destroy or dictate to millions: you can only expect to share their fate, or settle your differences amicably with them. You already find it so at school; and I wish you to be reconciled to your situation as soon and with as little pain as you can.

It was my misfortune perhaps to be bred up among Dissenters, who look with too jaundiced an eye at others, and set too high a value on their own peculiar pretensions. From being proscribed themselves, they learn to proscribe others; and come in the end to reduce all integrity of principle and soundness of opinion within the pale of their own little communion. Those who were out of it and did not belong to the class of *Rational Dissenters*, I was led erroneously to look upon as hardly deserving the name of rational beings.

Being thus satisfied as to the select few who are 'the salt of the earth,' it is easy to persuade ourselves that we are at the head of them, and to fancy ourselves of more importance in the scale of true desert than all the rest of the world put together, who do not interpret a certain text of Scripture in the manner that we have been taught to do. You will (from the difference of education) be free from this bigotry, and will, I hope, avoid every thing akin to the same exclusive and narrow-minded spirit. Think that the minds of men are various as their faces—that the modes and employments of life are numberless as they are necessary—that there is more than one class of merit—that though others may be wrong in some things, they are not so in all—and that countless races of men have been born, have lived and died without ever hearing of any one of those points in which you take a just pride and pleasure—and you will not err on the side of that spiritual pride or intellectual coxcombry which has been so often the bane of the studious and learned!

I observe you have got a way of speaking of your school-fellows as '*that* Hoare, *that* Harris,' and so on, as if you meant to mark them out for particular reprobation, or did not think them good enough for you. It is a bad habit to speak disrespectfully of others: for it will lead you to think and feel uncharitably towards them. Ill names beget ill blood. Even where there may be some repeated trifling provocation, it is better to be courteous, mild, and forbearing, than captious, impatient, and fretful. The faults of others too often arise out of our own ill-temper; or though they should be real, we shall not mend them, by exasperating ourselves against them. Treat your playmates, as Hamlet advises Polonius to treat the players, 'according to your own dignity, rather than their deserts.' If you fly out at every thing in them that you disapprove or think done on purpose to annoy you, you lie constantly at the mercy of their caprice, rudeness, or ill-nature. You should be more your own master.

Do not begin to quarrel with the world too soon: for, bad as it may be, it is the best we have to live in—here. If railing would have made it better, it would have been reformed long ago: but as this is not to be hoped for at present, the best way is to slide through it as contentedly and innocently as we may. The worst fault it has, is want of charity: and calling *knave* and *fool* at every turn will not cure this failing. Consider (as a matter of vanity) that if there were not so many knaves and fools as we find, the wise and honest would not be those rare and shining characters that they are allowed to be; and (as a matter of philosophy) that if the world be really incorrigible in this respect, it is a reflection to make one sad, not angry. We may laugh or weep at the madness of mankind: we have no right to

vilify them, for our own sakes or theirs. Misanthropy is not the disgust of the mind at human nature, but with itself; or it is laying its own exaggerated vices and foul blots at the door of others! Do not, however, mistake what I have here said. I would not have you, when you grow up, adopt the low and sordid fashion of palliating existing abuses or of putting the best face upon the worst things. I only mean that indiscriminate, unqualified satire can do little good, and that those who indulge in the most revolting speculations on human nature, do not themselves always set the fairest examples, or strive to prevent its lower degradation. They seem rather willing to reduce it to their theoretical standard. For the rest, the very outcry that is made (if sincere) shews that things cannot be quite so bad as they are represented. The abstract hatred and scorn of vice implies the capacity for virtue: the impatience expressed at the most striking instances of deformity proves the innate idea and love of beauty in the human mind. The best antidote I can recommend to you hereafter against the disheartening effect of such writings as those of Rochefoucault, Mandeville, and others, will be to look at the pictures of Raphael and Correggio. You need not be altogether ashamed, my dear little boy, of belonging to a species which could produce such faces as those; nor despair of doing something worthy of a laudable ambition, when you see what such hands have wrought! You will, perhaps, one day have reason to thank me for this advice.

As to your studies and school-exercises, I wish you to learn Latin, French, and dancing. I would insist upon the last more particularly, both because it is more likely to be neglected, and because it is of the greatest consequence to your success in life. Every thing almost depends upon first impressions; and these depend (besides *person*, which is not in our power) upon two things, *dress* and *address*, which every one may command with proper attention. These are the small coin in the intercourse of life, which are continually in request; and perhaps you will find at the year's end, or towards the close of life, that the daily insults, coldness, or contempt, to which you have been exposed by a neglect of such superficial recommendations, are hardly atoned for by the few proofs of esteem or admiration which your integrity or talents have been able to extort in the course of it. When we habitually disregard those things which we know will ensure the favourable opinion of others, it shews we set that opinion at defiance, or consider ourselves above it, which no one ever did with impunity. An inattention to our own persons implies a disrespect to others, and may often be traced no less to a want of good-nature than of good sense. The old maxim—*Desire to please, and you will infallibly please*—explains the whole matter. If there is a tendency to vanity

and affectation on this side of the question, there is an equal alloy of pride and obstinacy on the opposite one. Slovenliness may at any time be cured by an effort of resolution, but a graceful carriage requires an early habit, and in most cases the aid of the dancing-master. I would not have you, from not knowing how to enter a room properly, stumble at the very threshold in the good graces of those on whom it is possible the fate of your future life may depend. Nothing creates a greater prejudice against any one than awkwardness. A person who is confused in manner and gesture seems to have done something wrong, or as if he was conscious of no one qualification to build a confidence in himself upon. On the other hand, openness, freedom, self-possession, set others at ease with you by shewing that you are on good terms with yourself. Grace in women gains the affections sooner, and secures them longer, than any thing else—it is an outward and visible sign of an inward harmony of soul—as the want of it in men, as if the mind and body equally hitched in difficulties and were distracted with doubts, is the greatest impediment in the career of gallantry and road to the female heart. Another thing I would caution you against is not to pore over your books till you are bent almost double—a habit you will never be able to get the better of, and which you will find of serious ill consequence. *A stoop in the shoulders* sinks a man in public and in private estimation. You are at present straight enough, and you walk with boldness and spirit. Do nothing to take away the use of your limbs, or the spring and elasticity of your muscles. As to all worldly advantages, it is to the full of as much importance that your deportment should be erect and manly as your actions.

You will naturally find out all this and fall into it, if your attention is drawn out sufficiently to what is passing around you; and this will be the case, unless you are absorbed too much in books and those sedentary studies,

> 'Which waste the marrow, and consume the brain.'

You are, I think, too fond of reading as it is. As one means of avoiding excess in this way, I would wish you to make it a rule, never to read at meal-times, nor in company when there is any (even the most trivial) conversation going on, nor ever to let your eagerness to learn encroach upon your play-hours. Books are but one inlet of knowledge; and the pores of the mind, like those of the body, should be left open to all impressions. I applied too close to my studies, soon after I was of your age, and hurt myself irreparably by it. Whatever may be the value of learning, health and good spirits are of more.

I would have you, as I said, make yourself master of French, because you may find it of use in the commerce of life; and I would have you learn Latin, partly because I learnt it myself, and I would not have you without any of the advantages or sources of knowledge that I possessed—it would be a bar of separation between us—and secondly, because there is an atmosphere round this sort of classical ground, to which that of actual life is gross and vulgar. Shut out from this garden of early sweetness, we may well exclaim—

> 'How shall we part and wander down
> Into a lower world, to this obscure
> And wild? How shall we breathe in other air
> Less pure, accustom'd to immortal fruits?'

I do not think the Classics so indispensable to the cultivation of your intellect as on another account, which I have seen explained elsewhere, and you will have no objection to turn with me to the passage.

'The study of the Classics is less to be regarded as an exercise of the intellect, than as *a discipline of humanity*. The peculiar advantage of this mode of education consists not so much in strengthening the understanding, as in softening and refining the taste. It gives men liberal views; it accustoms the mind to take an interest in things foreign to itself; to love virtue for its own sake; to prefer fame to life, and glory to riches; and to fix our thoughts on the remote and permanent, instead of narrow and fleeting objects. It teaches us to believe that there is something really great and excellent in the world, surviving all the shocks of accident and fluctuations of opinion, and raises us above that low and servile fear, which bows only to present power and upstart authority. Rome and Athens filled a place in the history of mankind, which can never be occupied again. They were two cities set on a hill, which could not be hid; all eyes have seen them, and their light shines like a mighty sea-mark into the abyss of time.

> "Still green with bays each ancient altar stands,
> Above the reach of sacrilegious hands;
> Secure from flames, from envy's fiercer rage,
> Destructive war, and all-involving age.
> Hail, bards triumphant, born in happier days,
> Immortal heirs of universal praise!
> Whose honours with increase of ages grow,
> As streams roll down, enlarging as they flow!"

It is this feeling more than any thing else which produces a marked difference between the study of the ancient and modern languages,

and which, by the weight and importance of the consequences attached to the former, stamps every word with a monumental firmness. By conversing with the *mighty dead*, we imbibe sentiment with knowledge. We become strongly attached to those who can no longer either hurt or serve us, except through the influence which they exert over the mind. We feel the presence of that power which gives immortality to human thoughts and actions, and catch the flame of enthusiasm from all nations and ages.'

Because, however, you have learnt Latin and Greek, and can speak a different language, do not fancy yourself of a different order of beings from those you ordinarily converse with. They perhaps know and can do more *things* than you, though you have learnt a greater variety of *names* to express the same thing by. The great object indeed of these studies is to be 'a cure for a narrow and selfish spirit,' and to carry the mind out of its petty and local prejudices to the idea of a more general humanity. Do not fancy, because you are intimate with Homer and Virgil, that your neighbours who can never attain the same posthumous fame are to be despised, like those impudent valets who live in noble families and look down upon every one else. Though you are master of Cicero's 'Orations,' think it possible for a cobbler at a stall to be more eloquent than you. 'But you are a scholar, and he is not.' Well, then, you have that advantage over him, but it does not follow that you are to have every other. Look at the heads of the celebrated poets and philosophers of antiquity in the collection at Wilton, and you will say they answer to their works: but you will find others in the same collection whose names have hardly come down to us, that are equally fine, and cast in the same classic mould. Do you imagine that all the thoughts, genius, and capacity of those old and mighty nations are contained in a few odd volumes, to be thumbed by school-boys? This reflection is not meant to lessen your admiration of the great names to which you will be accustomed to look up, but to direct it to that solid mass of intellect and power, of which they were the most shining ornaments. I would wish you to excel in this sort of learning and to take a pleasure in it, because it is the path that has been chosen for you: but do not suppose that others do not excel equally in their line of study or exercise of skill, or that there is but one mode of excellence in art or nature. You have got on vastly beyond the point at which you set out; but others have been getting on as well as you in the same or other ways, and have kept pace with you. What then, you may ask, is the use of all the pains you have taken, if it gives you no superiority over mankind in general? It is this—You have reaped all the benefit of improvement and knowledge yourself; and farther, if you had not

moved forwards, you would by this time have been left behind. Envy no one, disparage no one, think yourself above no one. Their demerits will not piece out your deficiences; nor is it a waste of time and labour for you to cultivate your own talents, because you cannot bespeak a monopoly of all advantages. You are more learned than many of your acquaintance who may be more active, healthy, witty, successful in business or expert in some elegant or useful art than you; but you have no reason to complain, if you have attained the object of your ambition. Or if you should not be able to compass this from a want of genius or parts, yet learn, my child, to be contented with a mediocrity of acquirements. You may still be respectable in your conduct, and enjoy a tranquil obscurity, with more friends and fewer enemies than you might otherwise have had.

There is one almost certain drawback on a course of scholastic study, that it unfits men for active life. The *ideal* is always at variance with the *practical*. The habit of fixing the attention on the imaginary and abstracted deprives the mind equally of energy and fortitude. By indulging our imaginations on fictions and chimeras, where we have it all our own way and are led on only by the pleasure of the prospect, we grow fastidious, effeminate, lapped in idle luxury, impatient of contradiction, and unable to sustain the shock of real adversity, when it comes; as by being taken up with abstract reasoning or remote events in which we are merely passive spectators, we have no resources to provide against it, no readiness, or expedients for the occasion, or spirit to use them, even if they occur. We must think again before we determine, and thus the opportunity for action is lost. While we are considering the very best possible mode of gaining an object, we find that it has slipped through our fingers, or that others have laid rude, fearless hands upon it. The youthful tyro reluctantly discovers that the ways of the world are not his ways, nor their thoughts his thoughts. Perhaps the old monastic institutions were not in this respect unwise, which carried on to the end of life the secluded habits and romantic associations with which it began, and which created a privileged world for the inhabitants, distinct from the common world of men and women. You will bring with you from your books and solitary reveries a wrong measure of men and things, unless you correct it by careful experience and mixed observation. You will raise your standard of character as much too high at first as from disappointed expectation it will sink too low afterwards. The best qualifier of this theoretical *mania* and of the dreams of poets and moralists (who both treat of things as *they ought to be* and not as *they are*) is in one sense to be found in some of our own popular writers, such as our Novelists and periodical Essayists. But you had, after

all, better wait and see what things are than try to anticipate the results. You know more of a road by having travelled it than by all the conjectures and descriptions in the world. You will find the business of life conducted on a much more varied and individual scale than you would expect. People will be concerned about a thousand things that you have no idea of, and will be utterly indifferent to what you feel the greatest interest in. You will find good and evil, folly and discretion more mingled, and the shades of character running more into each other than they do in the ethical charts. No one is equally wise or guarded at all points, and it is seldom that any one is quite a fool. Do not be surprised, when you go out into the world, to find men talk exceedingly well on different subjects, who do not derive their information immediately from books. In the first place, the light of books is diffused very much abroad in the world in conversation and at second-hand; and besides, common sense is not a monopoly, and experience and observation are sources of information open to the man of the world as well as to the retired student. If you know more of the outline and principles, he knows more of the details and 'practique part of life.' A man may discuss the adventures of a campaign in which he was engaged very agreeably without having read the *Retreat of the Ten Thousand*, or give a singular account of the method of drying teas in China without being a profound chemist. It is the vice of scholars to suppose that there is no knowledge in the world but that of books. Do you avoid it, I conjure you; and thereby save yourself the pain and mortification that must otherwise ensue from finding out your mistake continually!

Gravity is one great ingredient in the conduct of life, and perhaps a certain share of it is hardly to be dispensed with. Few people can afford to be quite unaffected. At any rate, do not put your worst qualities foremost. Do not seek to distinguish yourself by being ridiculous; nor entertain that miserable ambition to be the sport and butt of the company. By aiming at a certain standard of behaviour or intellect, you will at least show your taste and value for what is excellent. There are those who *blurt* out their good things with so little heed of what they are about that no one thinks any thing of them; as others by keeping their folly to themselves gain the reputation of wisdom. Do not, however, affect to speak only in oracles, or to deal in *bon-mots*: condescend to the level of the company, and be free and accessible to all persons. Express whatever occurs to you, that cannot offend others or hurt yourself. Keep some opinions to yourself. Say what you please of others, but never repeat what you hear said of them to themselves. If you have nothing to offer yourself, laugh with the witty, assent to the wise; they will not think the

worse of you for it. Listen to information on subjects you are unacquainted with, instead of always striving to lead the conversation to some favourite one of your own. By the last method you will shine, but will not improve. I am ashamed myself ever to open my lips on any question I have ever written upon. It is much more difficult to be able to converse on an equality with a number of persons in turn, than to soar above their heads, and excite the stupid gaze of all companies by bestriding some senseless topic of your own and confounding the understandings of those who are ignorant of it. Be not too fond of argument. Indeed, by going much into company (which I do not, however, wish you to do) you will be weaned from this practice, if you set out with it. Rather suggest what remarks may have occurred to you on a subject than aim at dictating your opinions to others or at defending yourself at all points. You will learn more by agreeing in the main with others and entering into their trains of thinking, than by contradicting and urging them to extremities. Avoid singularity of opinion as well as of everything else. Sound conclusions come with practical knowledge, rather than with speculative refinements: in what we really understand, we reason but little. Long-winded disputes fill up the place of common sense and candid inquiry. Do not imagine that you will make people friends by showing your superiority over them: it is what they will neither admit nor forgive, unless you have a high and acknowledged reputation beforehand, which renders this sort of petty vanity more inexcusable. Seek to gain the good-will of others, rather than to extort their applause; and to this end, be neither too tenacious of your own claims, nor inclined to press too hard on their weaknesses.

Do not affect the society of your inferiors in rank, nor court that of the great. There can be no real sympathy in either case. The first will consider you as a restraint upon them, and the last as an intruder or *upon sufferance*. It is not a desirable distinction to be admitted into company as a man of talents. You are a mark for invidious observation. If you say nothing or merely behave with common propriety and simplicity, you seem to have no business there. If you make a studied display of yourself, it is arrogating a consequence you have no right to. If you are contented to pass as an indifferent person, they despise you; if you distinguish yourself, and show more knowledge, wit, or taste than they do, they hate you for it. You have no alternative. I would rather be asked out to sing than to talk. Every one does not pretend to a fine voice, but every one fancies he has as much understanding as another. Indeed, the secret of this sort of intercourse has been pretty well found out.

Literary men are seldom invited to the tables of the great; they send for players and musicians, as they keep monkeys and parrots!

I would not, however, have you run away with a notion that the rich are knaves or that lords are fools. They are for what I know as honest and as wise as other people. But it is a trick of our self-love, supposing that another has the decided advantage of us in one way, to strike a balance by taking it for granted (as a moral antithesis) that he must be as much beneath us in those qualities on which we plume ourselves, and which we would appropriate almost entirely to our own use. It is hard indeed if others are raised above us not only by the gifts of fortune, but of understanding too. It is not to be credited. People have an unwillingness to admit that the House of Lords can be equal in talent to the House of Commons. So in the other sex, if a woman is handsome, she is an idiot or no better than she should be: in ours, if a man is worth a million of money, he is a miser, a fellow that cannot spell his own name, or a poor creature in some way, to bring him to our level. This is malice, and not truth. Believe all the good you can of every one. Do not measure others by yourself. If they have advantages which you have not, let your liberality keep pace with their good fortune. Envy no one, and you need envy no one. If you have but the magnanimity to allow merit wherever you see it—understanding in a lord or wit in a cobbler—this temper of mind will stand you instead of many accomplishments. Think no man too happy. Raphael died young. Milton had the misfortune to be blind. If any one is vain or proud, it is from folly or ignorance. Those who pique themselves excessively on some one thing, have but that one thing to pique themselves upon, as languages, mechanics, &c. I do not say that this is not an enviable delusion where it is not liable to be disturbed; but at present knowledge is too much diffused and pretensions come too much into collision for this to be long the case; and it is better not to form such a prejudice at first than to have it to undo all the rest of one's life. If you learn any two things, though they may put you out of conceit one with the other, they will effectually cure you of any conceit you might have of yourself, by shewing the variety and scope there is in the human mind beyond the limits you had set to it.

You were convinced the first day that you could not learn Latin, which now you find easy. Be taught from this, not to think other obstacles insurmountable that you may meet with in the course of your life, though they seem so at first sight.

Attend above all things to your health; or rather, do nothing wilfully to impair it. Use exercise, abstinence, and regular hours. Drink water when you are alone, and wine or very little spirits in

company. It is the last that are ruinous by leading to unlimited excess. There is not the same headlong *impetus* in wine. But one glass of brandy and water makes you want another, that other makes you want a third, and so on, in an increased proportion. Therefore no one can stop midway who does not possess the resolution to abstain altogether; for the inclination is sharpened with its indulgence. Never gamble. Or if you play for any thing, never do so for what will give you uneasiness the next day. Be not precise in these matters: but do not pass certain limits, which it is difficult to recover. Do nothing in the irritation of the moment, but take time to reflect. Because you have done one foolish thing, do not do another; nor throw away your health or reputation or comfort, to thwart impertinent advice. Avoid a spirit of contradiction, both in words and actions. Do not aim at what is beyond your reach, but at what is within it. Indulge in calm and pleasing pursuits, rather than violent excitements; and learn to conquer your own will, instead of striving to obtain the mastery of that of others.

With respect to your friends, I would wish you to choose them neither from caprice nor accident, and to adhere to them as long as you can. Do not make a surfeit of friendship, through over-sanguine enthusiasm, nor expect it to last for ever. Always speak well of those with whom you have once been intimate, or take some part of the censure you bestow on them to yourself. Never quarrel with tried friends, or those whom you wish to continue such. Wounds of this kind are sure to open again. When once the prejudice is removed that sheathes defects, familiarity only causes jealousy and distrust. Do not keep on with a mockery of friendship after the substance is gone—but part, while you can part friends. Bury the carcase of friendship: it is not worth embalming.

As to the books you will have to read by choice or for amusement, the best are the commonest. The names of many of them are already familiar to you. Read them as you grow up with all the satisfaction in your power, and make much of them. It is perhaps the greatest pleasure you will have in life, the one you will think of longest, and repent of least. If my life had been more full of calamity than it has been (much more than I hope yours will be) I would live it over again, my poor little boy, to have read the books I did in my youth.

In politics I wish you to be an honest man, but no brawler. Hate injustice and falsehood for your own sake. Be neither a martyr, nor a sycophant. Wish well to the world without expecting to see it much better than it is; and do not gratify the enemies of liberty by putting yourself at their mercy, if it can be avoided with honour.

If you ever marry, I would wish you to marry the woman you like. Do not be guided by the recommendation of friends. Nothing will atone for or overcome an original distaste. It will only increase from intimacy; and if you are to live separate, it is better not to come together. There is no use in dragging a chain through life, unless it binds one to the object we love. Choose a mistress from among your equals. You will be able to understand her character better, and she will be more likely to understand yours. Those in an inferior station to yourself will doubt your good intentions, and misapprehend your plainest expressions. All that you swear is to them a riddle or downright nonsense. You cannot by possibility translate your thoughts into their dialect. They will be ignorant of the meaning of half you say, and laugh at the rest. As mistresses, they will have no sympathy with you; and as wives, you can have none with them. But they will do all they can to thwart you, and to retrieve themselves in their own opinion by trick and low cunning. No woman ever married into a family above herself that did not try to make all the mischief she could in it. Be not in haste to marry, nor to engage your affections, where there is no probability of a return. Do not fancy every woman you see the heroine of a romance, a Sophia Western, a Clarissa, or a Julia; and yourself the potential hero of it, Tom Jones, Lovelace, or St. Preux. Avoid this error as you would shrink back from a precipice. All your fine sentiments and romantic notions will (of themselves) make no more impression on one of these delicate creatures, than on a piece of marble. Their soft bosoms are steel to your amorous refinements, if you have no other pretensions. It is not what you think of them that determines their choice, but what they think of you. Endeavour, if you would escape lingering torments and the gnawing of the worm that dies not, to find out this, and to abide by the issue. We trifle with, make sport of, and despise those who are attached to us, and follow those that fly from us. 'We hunt the wind, we worship a statue, cry aloud to the desert.' Do you, my dear boy, stop short in this career, if you find yourself setting out in it, and make up your mind to this, that if a woman does not like you of her own accord, that is, from involuntary impressions, nothing you can say or do or suffer for her sake will make her, but will set her the more against you. So the song goes—

> 'Quit, quit for shame; this will not move:
> If of herself she will not love,
> Nothing will make her, the devil take her!'

Your pain is her triumph; the more she feels you in her power,

the worse she will treat you: the more you make it appear you deserve her regard, the more will she resent it as an imputation on her first judgment. Study first impressions above all things; for every thing depends on them, in love especially. Women are armed by nature and education with a power of resisting the importunity of men, and they use this power according to their discretion. They enforce it to the utmost rigour of the law against those whom they do not like, and relax their extreme severity proportionably in favour of those that they do like and who in general care as little about them. Hence we see so many desponding lovers and forlorn damsels. Love in women (at least) is either vanity, or interest, or fancy. It is a merely selfish feeling. It has nothing to do (I am sorry to say) with friendship, or esteem, or even pity. I once asked a girl, the pattern of her sex in shape and mind and attractions, whether she did not think Mr. Coleridge had done wrong in making the heroine of his beautiful ballad story of Geneviève take compassion on her hapless lover—

> 'When on the yellow forest-leaves
> A dying man he lay—'

And whether she believed that any woman ever fell in love through a sense of compassion; and she made answer—'Not if it was against her inclination!' I would take the lady's word *for a thousand pound*, on this point. Pain holds antipathy to pleasure; pity is not akin to love; a dying man has more need of a nurse than of a mistress. There is no forcing liking. It is as little to be fostered by reason and good-nature, as it can be controlled by prudence or propriety. It is a mere blind, headstrong impulse. Least of all flatter yourself that talents or virtue will recommend you to the favour of the sex, in lieu of exterior advantages. Oh! no. Women care nothing about poets, or philosophers, or politicians. They go by a man's looks and manner. Richardson calls them 'an eye-judging sex;' and I am sure he knew more about them than I can pretend to do. If you run away with a pedantic notion that they care a pin's-point about your head or your heart, you will repent it too late. Some blue-stocking may have her vanity flattered by your reputation or be edified by the solution of a metaphysical problem or a critical remark or a dissertation on the state of the nation, and fancy that she has a taste for intellect and is an epicure in sentiment. No true woman ever regarded any thing but her lover's person and address. Gravity will here answer all the same purpose without understanding, gaiety without wit, folly without good-nature, and impudence without any other pretension. The natural and instinctive passion of love is excited by qualities not peculiar to artists, authors, and men of letters.

It is not the jest but the laugh that follows, not the sentiment but the glance that accompanies it, that *tells*—in a word, the sense of actual enjoyment that imparts itself to others, and excites mutual understanding and inclination. Authors, on the other hand, feel nothing spontaneously. The common incidents and circumstances of life with which others are taken up, make no alteration in them, nor provoke any of the common expressions of surprise, joy, admiration, anger, or merriment. Nothing stirs their blood or accelerates their juices or tickles their veins. Instead of yielding to the first natural and lively impulses of things, in which they would find sympathy, they screw themselves up to some far-fetched view of the subject in order to be unintelligible. Realities are not good enough for them, till they undergo the process of imagination and reflection. If you offer them your hand to shake, they will hardly take it; for this does not amount to a proposition. If you enter their room suddenly, they testify neither surprise nor satisfaction: no new idea is elicited by it. Yet if you suppose this to be a repulse, you are mistaken. They will enter into your affairs or combat your ideas with all the warmth and vehemence imaginable, as soon as they have a subject started. But their faculty for thinking must be set in motion, before you can put any soul into them. They are intellectual dram-drinkers; and without their necessary stimulus, are torpid, dead, insensible to every thing. They have great life of mind, but none of body. They do not drift with the stream of company or of passing occurrences, but are straining at some hyperbole or striking out a bye-path of their own. Follow them who list. Their minds are a sort of Herculaneum, full of old, petrified images;—are set in stereotype, and little fitted to the ordinary occasions of life.

What chance, then, can they have with women, who deal only in the pantomime of discourse, in gesticulation and the flippant bye-play of the senses, 'nods and winks and wreathed smiles;' and to whom to offer a remark is an impertinence, or a reason an affront? The only way in which I ever knew mental qualities or distinction tell was in the clerical character; and women do certainly incline to this with some sort of favourable regard. Whether it is that the sanctity of pretension piques curiosity, or that the habitual submission of their understandings to their spiritual guides subdues the will, a popular preacher generally has the choice among the *élite* of his female flock. According to Mrs. Inchbald (see her 'Simple Story') there is another reason why religious courtship is not without its charms! But as I do not intend you for the church, do not, in thinking to study yourself into the good graces of the fair, study yourself out of them, millions of miles. Do not place thought as a barrier between

you and love: do not abstract yourself into the regions of truth, far from the smile of earthly beauty. Let not the cloud sit upon your brow: let not the canker sink into your heart. Look up, laugh loud, talk big, keep the colour in your cheek and the fire in your eye, adorn your person, maintain your health, your beauty, and your animal spirits, and you will pass for a fine man. But should you let your blood stagnate in some deep metaphysical question, or refine too much in your ideas of the sex, forgetting yourself in a dream of exalted perfection, you will want an eye to cheer you, a hand to guide you, a bosom to lean on, and will stagger into your grave, old before your time, unloved and unlovely. If you feel that you have not the necessary advantages of person, confidence, and manner, and that it is *up-hill* work with you to gain the ear of beauty, quit the pursuit at once, and seek for other satisfactions and consolations.

A spider, my dear, the meanest creature that crawls or lives, has its mate or fellow: but a scholar has no mate or fellow. For myself, I had courted thought, I had felt pain; and Love turned away his face from me. I have gazed along the silent air for that smile which had lured me to my doom. I no more heard those accents which would have burst upon me, like a voice from heaven. I loathed the light that shone on my disgrace. Hours, days, years, passed away; and only turned false hope to fixed despair. And as my frail bark sails down the stream of time, the God of Love stands on the shore, and as I stretch out my hands to him in vain, claps his wings, and mocks me as I pass!

There is but one other point on which I meant to speak to you, and that is the choice of a profession. This, probably, had better be left to time or accident or your own inclination. You have a very fine ear, but I have somehow a prejudice against men-singers, and indeed against the stage altogether. It is an uncertain and ungrateful soil. All professions are bad that depend on reputation, which is 'as often got without merit as lost without deserving.' Yet I cannot easily reconcile myself to your being a slave to business, and I shall hardly be able to leave you an independence. A situation in a public office is secure, but laborious and mechanical, and without the two great springs of life, Hope and Fear. Perhaps, however, it might ensure you a competence, and leave you leisure for some other favourite amusement or pursuit. I have said all reputation is hazardous, hard to win, harder to keep. Many never attain a glimpse of what they have all their lives been looking for, and others survive a passing shadow of it. Yet if I were to name one pursuit rather than another, I should wish you to be a good painter, if such a thing could be hoped. I have failed in this myself, and should wish you to be able

to do what I have not—to paint like Claude or Rembrandt or Guido or Vandyke, if it were possible. Artists, I think, who have succeeded in their chief object, live to be old, and are agreeable old men. Their minds keep alive to the last. Cosway's spirits never flagged till after ninety, and Nollekins, though nearly blind, passed all his mornings in giving directions about some group or bust in his work-shop. You have seen Mr. Northcote, that delightful specimen of the last age. With what avidity he takes up his pencil, or lays it down again to talk of numberless things! His eye has not lost its lustre, nor 'paled its ineffectual fire.' His body is a shadow: he himself is a pure spirit. There is a kind of immortality about this sort of ideal and visionary existence that dallies with Fate and baffles the grim monster, Death. If I thought you could make as clever an artist and arrive at such an agreeable old age as Mr. Northcote, I should declare at once for your devoting yourself to this enchanting profession; and in that reliance, should feel less regret at some of my own disappointments, and little anxiety on your account!

## BELIEF, WHETHER VOLUNTARY?

'Thy wish was father, Harry, to that thought.'

It is an axiom in modern philosophy (among many other false ones) that belief is absolutely involuntary, since we draw our inferences from the premises laid before us and cannot possibly receive any other impression of things than that which they naturally make upon us. This theory, that the understanding is purely passive in the reception of truth, and that our convictions are not in the power of our will, was probably first invented or insisted upon as a screen against religious persecution, and as an answer to those who imputed bad motives to all who differed from the established faith, and thought they could reform heresy and impiety by the application of fire and the sword. No doubt, that is not the way: for the will in that case irritates itself and grows refractory against the doctrines thus absurdly forced upon it; and as it has been said, the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church. But though force and terror may not be always the surest way to make converts, it does not follow that there may not be other means of influencing our opinions, besides the naked and abstract evidence for any proposition: the sun melts the resolution which the storm could not shake. In such points as, whether less an object is black or white, or whether two and two make four, [1] we

[1] Hobbes is of opinion that men would deny this, if they had any interest in doing so.

may not be able to believe as we please or to deny the evidence of our reason and senses: but in those points on which mankind differ, or where we can be at all in suspense as to which side we shall take, the truth is not quite so plain or palpable; it admits of a variety of views and shades of colouring, and it should appear that we can dwell upon whichever of these we choose, and heighten or soften the circumstances adduced in proof, according as passion and inclination throw their casting-weight into the scale. Let any one, for instance, have been brought up in an opinion, let him have remained in it all his life, let him have attached all his notions of respectability, of the approbation of his fellow-citizens or his own self-esteem to it, let him then first hear it called in question and a strong and unforeseen objection stated to it, will not this startle and shock him as if he had seen a spectre, and will he not struggle to resist the arguments that would unsettle his habitual convictions, as he would resist the divorcing of soul and body? Will he come to the consideration of the question impartially, indifferently, and without any wrong bias, or give the painful and revolting truth the same cordial welcome as the long-cherished and favourite prejudice? To say that the truth or falsehood of a proposition is the only circumstance that gains it admittance into the mind, independently of the pleasure or pain it affords us, is itself an assertion made in pure caprice or desperation. A person may have a profession or employment connected with a certain belief, it may be the means of livelihood to him, and the changing it may require considerable sacrifices or may leave him almost without resource (to say nothing of mortified pride)—this will not mend the matter. The evidence against his former opinion may be so strong (or may appear so to him) that he may be obliged to give it up, but not without a pang and after having tried every artifice and strained every nerve to give the utmost weight to the arguments favouring his own side, and to make light of and throw those against him into the background. And nine times in ten this bias of the will and tampering with the proofs will prevail. It is only with very vigorous or very candid minds, that the understanding exercises its just and boasted prerogative and induces its votaries to relinquish a profitable delusion and embrace the dowerless truth. Even then they have the sober and discreet part of the world, all the *bons pères de famille*, who look principally to the main chance, against them, and they are regarded as little better than lunatics or profligates to fling up a good salary and a provision for themselves and families for the sake of that foolish thing, a *Conscience*! With the herd, belief on all abstract and disputed topics is voluntary, that is, is determined by considerations of personal ease and convenience, in the teeth of logical

analysis and demonstration, which are set aside as mere waste of words. In short, generally speaking, people stick to an opinion that they have long supported and that supports them. How else shall we account for the regular order and progression of society: for the maintenance of certain opinions in particular professions and classes of men, as we keep water in cisterns, till in fact they stagnate and corrupt: and that the world and every individual in it is not 'blown about with every wind of doctrine' and whisper of uncertainty? There is some more solid ballast required to keep things in their established order than the restless fluctuation of opinion and 'infinite agitation of wit.' We find that people in Protestant countries continue Protestants and in Catholic countries Papists. This, it may be answered, is owing to the ignorance of the great mass of them; but is their faith less bigoted, because it is not founded on a regular investigation of the proofs, and is merely an obstinate determination to believe what they have been told and accustomed to believe? Or is it not the same with the doctors of the church and its most learned champions, who read the same texts, turn over the same authorities, and discuss the same knotty points through their whole lives, only to arrive at opposite conclusions? How few are shaken in their opinions, or have the grace to confess it! Shall we then suppose them all impostors, and that they keep up the farce of a system, of which they do not believe a syllable? Far from it: there may be individual instances, but the generality are not only sincere but bigots. Those who are unbelievers and hypocrites scarcely know it themselves, or if a man is not quite a knave, what pains will he not take to make a fool of his reason, that his opinions may tally with his professions? Is there then a Papist and a Protestant understanding—one prepared to receive the doctrine of transubstantiation and the other to reject it? No such thing: but in either case the ground of reason is preoccupied by passion, habit, example—*the scales are falsified.* Nothing can therefore be more inconsequential than to bring the authority of great names in favour of opinions long established and universally received. Cicero's being a Pagan was no proof in support of the Heathen mythology, but simply of his being born at Rome before the Christian era; though his lurking scepticism on the subject and sneers at the augurs told against it, for this was an acknowledgment drawn from him in spite of a prevailing prejudice. Sir Isaac Newton and Napier of Marchiston both wrote on the *Apocalypse*; but this is neither a ground for a speedy anticipation of the Millennium, nor does it invalidate the doctrine of the gravitation of the planets or the theory of logarithms. One party would borrow the sanction of these great names in support of their wildest and most mystical opinions;

others would arraign them of folly and weakness for having attended to such subjects at all. Neither inference is just. It is a simple question of chronology, or of the time when these celebrated mathematicians lived, and of the studies and pursuits which were then chiefly in vogue. The wisest man is the slave of opinion, except on one or two points on which he strikes out a light for himself and holds a torch to the rest of the world. But we are disposed to make it out that all opinions are the result of reason, because they profess to be so; and when they are *right*, that is, when they agree with ours, that there can be no alloy of human frailty or perversity in them; the very strength of our prejudice making it pass for pure reason, and leading us to attribute any deviation from it to bad faith or some unaccountable singularity or infatuation. *Alas, poor human nature!* Opinion is for the most part only a battle, in which we take part and defend the side we have adopted, in the one case or the other, with a view to share the honour or the spoil. Few will stand up for a losing cause or have the fortitude to adhere to a proscribed opinion; and when they do, it is not always from superior strength of understanding or a disinterested love of truth, but from obstinacy and sullenness of temper. To affirm that we do not cultivate an acquaintance with truth as she presents herself to us in a more or less pleasing shape, or is shabbily attired or well-dressed, is as much as to say that we do not shut our eyes to the light when it dazzles us, or withdraw our hands from the fire when it scorches us.

> 'Masterless passion sways us to the mood
> Of what it likes or loathes.'

Are we not averse to believe bad news relating to ourselves—forward enough if it relates to others? If something is said reflecting on the character of an intimate friend or near relative, how unwilling we are to lend an ear to it, how we catch at every excuse or palliating circumstance, and hold out against the clearest proof, while we instantly believe any idle report against an enemy, magnify the commonest trifles into crimes, and torture the evidence against him to our heart's content! Do not we change our opinion of the same person, and make him out to be *black* or *white* according to the terms we happen to be on? If we have a favourite author, do we not exaggerate his beauties and pass over his defects, and *vice versâ*? The human mind plays the interested advocate much oftener than the upright and inflexible judge, in the colouring and relief it gives to the facts brought before it. We believe things not more because they are true or probable, than because we desire, or (if the imagination once takes that turn) because we dread them. 'Fear has more devils than vast

hell can hold.' The sanguine always hope, the gloomy always despond, from temperament and not from fore-thought. Do we not disguise the plainest facts from ourselves if they are disagreeable. Do we not flatter ourselves with impossibilities? What girl does not look in the glass to persuade herself she is handsome? What woman ever believes herself old, or does not hate to be called so: though she knows the exact year and day of her age, the more she tries to keep up the appearance of youth to herself and others? What lover would ever acknowledge a flaw in the character of his mistress, or would not construe her turning her back on him into a proof of attachment? The story of *January and May* is pat to our purpose; for the credulity of mankind as to what touches our inclinations has been proverbial in all ages: yet we are told that the mind is passive in making up these wilful accounts, and is guided by nothing but the *pros* and *cons* of evidence. Even in action and where we still may determine by proper precaution the event of things, instead of being compelled to shut our eyes to what we cannot help, we still are the dupes of the feeling of the moment, and prefer amusing ourselves with fair appearances to securing more solid benefits by a sacrifice of Imagination and stubborn Will to Truth. The blindness of passion to the most obvious and well known consequences is deplorable. There seems to be a particular fatality in this respect. Because a thing is in our power *till* we have committed ourselves, we appear to dally, to trifle with, to make light of it, and to think it will still be in our power *after* we have committed ourselves. Strange perversion of the reasoning faculties, which is little short of madness, and which yet is one of the constant and practical sophisms of human life! It is as if one should say—I am in no danger from a tremendous machine unless I touch such a spring and therefore I will approach it, I will play with the danger, I will laugh at it, and at last in pure sport and wantonness of heart, from my sense of previous security, I *will* touch it—and *there's an end.* While the thing remains in contemplation, we may be said to stand safe and smiling on the brink: as soon as we proceed to action we are drawn into the vortex of passion and hurried to our destruction. A person taken up with some one purpose or passion is intent only upon that: he drives out the thought of every thing but its gratification: in the pursuit of that he is blind to consequences: his first object being attained, they all at once, and as if by magic, rush upon his mind. The engine recoils, he is caught in his own snare. A servant girl, for some pique, or for an angry word, determines to poison her mistress. She knows before hand (just as well as she does afterwards) that it is at least a hundred chances to one she will be hanged if she succeeds, yet this has no more effect

upon her than if she had never heard of any such matter. The only idea that occupies her mind and hardens it against every other, is that of the affront she has received, and the desire of revenge; she broods over it; she meditates the mode, she is haunted with her scheme night and day; it works like poison; it grows into a madness, and she can have no peace till it is accomplished and *off her mind*; but the moment this is the case, and her passion is assuaged, fear takes place of hatred, the slightest suspicion alarms her with the certainty of her fate from which she before wilfully averted her thoughts; she runs wildly from the officers before they know any thing of the matter; the gallows stares her in the face, and if none else accuses her, so full is she of her danger and her guilt, that she probably betrays herself. She at first would see no consequences to result from her crime but the getting rid of a present uneasiness; she now sees the very worst. The whole seems to depend on the turn given to the imagination, on our immediate disposition to attend to this or that view of the subject, the evil or the good. As long as our intention is unknown to the world, before it breaks out into action, it seems to be deposited in our own bosoms, to be a mere feverish dream, and to be left with all its consequences under our imaginary controul: but no sooner is it realised and known to others, than it appears to have escaped from our reach, we fancy the whole world are up in arms against us, and vengeance is ready to pursue and overtake us. So in the pursuit of pleasure, we see only that side of the question which we approve: the disagreeable consequences (which may take place) make no part of our intention or concern, or of the wayward exercise of our will: if they should happen we cannot help it; they form an ugly and unwished-for contrast to our favourite speculation: we turn our thoughts another way, repeating the adage *quod sic mihi ostendis incredulus odi*. It is a good remark in 'Vivian Grey,' that a bankrupt walks the streets the day before his name is in the Gazette with the same erect and confident brow as ever, and only feels the mortification of his situation after it becomes known to others. Such is the force of sympathy, and its power to take off the edge of internal conviction! As long as we can impose upon the world, we can impose upon ourselves, and trust to the flattering appearances, though we know them to be false. We put off the evil day as long as we can, make a jest of it as the certainty becomes more painful, and refuse to acknowledge the secret to ourselves till it can no longer be kept from all the world. In short, we believe just as little or as much as we please of those things in which our will can be supposed to interfere; and it is only by setting aside our own interests and inclinations on more general questions that we stand any chance of

arriving at a fair and rational judgment. Those who have the largest hearts have the soundest understandings; and he is the truest philosopher who can forget himself. This is the reason why philosophers are often said to be mad, for thinking only of the abstract truth and of none of its worldly adjuncts,—it seems like an absence of mind, or as if the devil had got into them! If belief were not in some degree voluntary, or were grounded entirely on strict evidence and absolute proof, every one would be a martyr to his opinions, and we should have no power of evading or glossing over those matter-of-fact conclusions for which positive vouchers could be produced, however painful these conclusions might be to our own feelings, or offensive to the prejudices of others.

## DEFINITION OF WIT

Wit is the putting together in jest, *i.e.* in fancy, or in bare supposition, ideas between which there is a serious, *i.e.* a customary incompatibility, and by this pretended union, or juxta-position, to point out more strongly some lurking incongruity. Or, wit is the dividing a sentence or an object into a number of constituent parts, as suddenly and with the same vivacity of apprehension to compound them again with other objects, 'wherein the most distant resemblance or the most partial coincidence may be found.' It is the *polypus* power of the mind, by which a distinct life and meaning is imparted to the different parts of a sentence or object after they are severed from each other; or it is the prism dividing the simplicity and candour of our ideas into a parcel of motley and variegated hues; or it is the mirror broken into pieces, each fragment of which reflects a new light from surrounding objects; or it is the untwisting the chain of our ideas, whereby each link is made to hook on more readily to others than when they were all bound up together by habit, and with a view to a *set* purpose. Ideas exist as a sort of *fixtures* in the understanding; they are like *moveables* (that will also unscrew and take to pieces) in the wit or fancy. If our grave notions were always well founded; if there were no aggregates of power, of prejudice, and absurdity; if the value and importance of an object went on increasing with the opinion entertained of it, and with the surrender of our faith, freedom, and every thing else to aggrandise it, then 'the squandering glances' of the wit, 'whereby the wise man's folly is anatomised,' would be as impertinent as they would be useless. But while gravity and imposture not only exist, but reign triumphant; while the proud, obstinate, sacred tumours rear their heads on high, and are trying to get a new lease of for

ever and a day; then oh! for the Frenchman's art ('Voltaire's?—the same') to break the torpid spell, and reduce the bloated mass to its native insignificance! When a Ferdinand still rules, seated on his throne of darkness and blood, by English bayonets and by English gold (that have no mind to remove him thence) who is not glad that an Englishman has the wit and spirit to translate the title of *King Ferdinand* into *Thing Ferdinand*; and does not regret that, instead of pointing the public scorn and exciting an indignant smile, the stroke of wit has not the power to shatter, to wither, and annihilate in its lightning blaze the monstrous assumption, with all its open or covert abettors? This would be a *set-off*, indeed, to the joint efforts of pride, ignorance, and hypocrisy: as it is, wit plays its part, and does not play it ill, though it is too apt to cut both ways. It may be said that what I have just quoted is not an instance of the decomposition of an idea or word into its elements, and finding a solid sense hid in the unnoticed particles of wit, but is the addition of another element or letter. But it was the same lively perception of individual and salient points, that saw the word KING stuck up in capital letters, as it were, and like a transparency in the *Illuminated Missal* of the Fancy, that enabled the satirist to conjure up the letter T before it, and made the transition (urged by contempt) easy. For myself, with all my blind, rooted prejudices against the name, it would be long enough before I should hit upon so happy a mode of expressing them. My mind is not sufficiently alert and disengaged. I cannot run along the letters composing it like the spider along its web, to see what they are or how to combine them anew; I am crushed like the worm, and writhing beneath the load. I can give no reasons for the faith that is in me, unless I read a novel of Sir Walter's, but there I find plenty of examples to justify my hatred of kings in former times, and to prevent my wishing to 'revive the ancient spirit of loyalty' in this! Wit, then, according to this account of it, depends on the rapid analysis or solution of continuity in our ideas, which, by detaching, puts them into a condition to coalesce more readily with others, and form new and unexpected combinations: but does all analysis imply wit, or where is the difference? Does the examining the flowers and leaves in the cover of a chair-bottom, or the several squares in a marble pavement, constitute wit? Does looking through a microscope amount to it? The painter analyses the face into features—nose, eyes, and mouth—the features into their component parts: but this process of observation and attention to details only leads him to discriminate more nicely, and not to confound objects. The mathematician *abstracts* in his reasonings, and considers the same line, now as forming the side of a triangle, now of a square figure; but does he laugh at

the discovery, or tell it to any one else as a monstrous good jest? These questions require an answer; and an evasive one will not do. With respect to the wit of words, the explanation is not difficult; and if all wit were verbal, my task would be soon ended. For language, being in its own nature arbitrary and ambiguous; or consisting of 'sounds significant,' which are now applied to one thing, now to something wholly different and unconnected, the most opposite and jarring mixtures may be introduced into our ideas by making use of this medium which looks two ways at once, either by applying the same word to two different meanings, or by dividing it into several parts, each probably the sign of a different thing, and which may serve as the starting-post of a different set of associations. The very circumstance which at first one might suppose would convert all the world into punsters and word-catchers, and make a Babel and chaos of language, *viz.* the arbitrary and capricious nature of the symbols it uses, is that which prevents them from becoming so; for words not being substantive things in themselves, and utterly valueless and unimportant except as the index of thought, the mind takes no notice of or lays no kind of stress upon them, passes on to what is to follow, uses them mechanically and almost unconsciously; and thus the syllables of which a word may be composed, are lost in its known import, and the word itself in the general context. We may be said neither to hear nor see the words themselves; we attend only to the inference, the intention they are meant to communicate. This merging of the sound in the sense, of the means in the end, both common sense, the business of life, and the limitation of the human faculties dictate. But men of wit and leisure are not contented with this; in the discursiveness of their imaginations and with their mercurial spirits, they find it an amusement to attend not only to the conclusion or the meaning of words, but to criticise and have an eye to the words themselves. Dull, plodding people go no farther than the literal, or more properly, the practical sense; the parts of a word or phrase are *massed together* in their habitual conceptions; their rigid understandings are confined to the one meaning of any word predetermined by its place in the sentence, and they are propelled forward to the end without looking to the right or the left. The others, who are less the creatures of habit and have a greater quantity of disposable activity, take the same words out of harness, as it were, lend them wings, and flutter round them in all sorts of fantastic combinations, and in every direction that they choose to take. For instance: the word *elder* signifies in the dictionary either *age* or a certain sort of *tree* or *berry*; but if you mention *elder wine* all the other senses sink into the dictionary as superfluous and nonsensical, and you think only of the wine

which happens to bear this name. It required, therefore, a man of Mr. Lamb's wit and disdain of the ordinary trammels of thought, to cut short a family dispute over some very excellent wine of this description, by saying, 'I wonder what it is that makes *elder wine* so very pleasant, when *elder brothers* are so extremely disagreeable?' *Compagnons du lys*, may mean either the *companions of the order of the flower-de-luce*, or the *companions of Ulysses*—who were transformed into swine—according as you lay the emphasis. The French wits, at the restoration of Louis XVIII., with admirable point and truth, applied it in this latter sense. Two things may thus meet, in the casual construction and artful encounters of language, wide as the poles asunder and yet perfectly alike; and this is the perfection of wit, when the physical sound is the same, the physical sense totally unlike, and the moral sense absolutely identical. What is it that in things supplies the want of the *double-entendre* of language?—ABSURDITY. And this is the very signification of the term. For it is only when the two contradictory natures are found in the same object that the verbal wit holds good, and the real wit or *jeu d'esprit* exists and may be brought out wherever this contradiction is obvious with or without the *jeu-de-mots* to assist it. We can comprehend how the evolving or disentangling an unexpected coincidence, hid under the same name, is full of ambiguity and surprise; but an absurdity may be written on the face of a thing without the help of language; and it is in detecting and embodying this that the finest wit lies. Language is merely one instrument or handle that forwards the operation: Fancy is the midwife of wit. But how?—If we look narrowly and attentively, we shall find that there is a language of things as well as words, and the same variety of meaning, a hidden and an obvious, a partial and a general one, in both the one and the other. For things, any more than words, are not detached, independent existences, but are connected and cohere together by habit and circumstances in certain sets of association, and consist of an alphabet, which is thus formed into words and regular propositions, which being once done and established as the understood order of the world, the particular ideas are either not noticed, or *determined* to a set purpose and 'foregone conclusion,' just as the letters of a word are sunk in the word, or the different possible meanings of a word adjusted by the context. One part of an object being habitually associated with others, or one object with a set of other objects, we *lump* the whole together, take the general rule for granted, and merge the details in a blind and confused idea of the aggregate result. This, then, is the province of wit; to penetrate through the disguise or crust with which indolence and custom 'skin and slur over' our ideas, to move this slough of prejudice, and to

resolve these aggregates or bundles of things into their component parts by a more lively and unshackled conception of their distinctions, and the possible combinations of these, so as to throw a glancing and fortuitous light upon the whole. There is then, it is obvious, a *double meaning* in things or ideas as well as in words (each being ordinarily regarded by the mind merely as the mechanical signs or links to hold together other ideas connected with them)—and it is in detecting this *double meaning* that wit in either case is shown. Having no books at hand to refer to for examples, and in the dearth of imagination which I naturally labour under, I must look round the room in search of illustrations. I see a number of stars or diamond figures in the carpet, with the violent contrast of red and yellow and fantastic wreaths of flowers twined round them, without being able to extract either edification or a particle of amusement from them: a joint-stool and a fire-screen in a corner are equally silent on the subject —the first hint I receive (or glimmering of light) is from a pair of tongs which, placed formally astride on the fender, bear a sort of resemblance to the human figure called *long legs and no body*. The absurdity is not in the tongs (for that is their usual shape) but in the human figure which has borrowed a likeness foreign to itself. With this *contre-sens*, and the uneasiness and confusion in our habitual ideas which it excites, and the effort to clear up this by throwing it from us into a totally distinct class of objects, where by being made plain and palpable, it is proved to have nothing to do with that into which it has obtruded itself, and to which it makes pretensions, commences the operation of wit and the satisfaction it yields to the mind. This I think is the cause of the delightful nature of wit, and of its relieving, instead of aggravating, the pains of defect or deformity, by pointing it out in the most glaring colours, inasmuch as by so doing, we, as it were, completely detach the peccant part and restore the sense of propriety which, in its undetected and unprobed state, it was beginning to disturb. It is like taking a grain of sand out of the eye, a thorn out of the foot. We have discharged our mental reckoning, and had our revenge. Thus, when we say of a *snub-nose*, that it is like an ace of clubs, it is less out of spite to the individual than to vindicate and place beyond a doubt the propriety of our notions of form in general. Butler compares the knight's red, formal-set beard to a tile:—

> 'In cut and die so like a tile,
> A sudden view it would beguile;'

we laugh in reading this, but the triumph is less over the wretched precisian than it is the triumph of common sense. So Swift exclaims:—

> 'The house of brother Van I spy,
> In shape resembling a goose-pie.'

Here, if the satire was just, the characteristics of want of solidity, of incongruity, and fantastical arrangement were inherent in the building, and written on its front to the discerning eye, and only required to be brought out by the simile of the goose-pie, which is an immediate test and illustration (being an extreme case) of those qualities. The absurdity, which before was either admired, or only suspected, now stands revealed, and is turned into a laughing-stock, by the new version of the building into a goose-pie (as much as if the metamorphosis had been effected by a play of words, combining the most opposite things), for the mind in this case having narrowly escaped being imposed upon by taking a trumpery edifice for a stately pile, and perceiving the cheat, naturally wishes to cut short the dispute by finding out the most discordant object possible, and nicknames the building after it. There can be no farther question whether a goose-pie is a fine building. Butler compares the sun rising after the dark night to a lobster boiled, and 'turned from black to red.' This is equally mock-wit and mock-poetry, as the sun can neither be exalted nor degraded by the comparison. It is a play upon the ideas, like what we see in a play upon words, without meaning. In a pantomime at Sadler's Wells, some years ago, they improved upon this hint, and threw a young chimney-sweeper into a cauldron of boiling water, who came out a smart, dapper volunteer. This was *practical wit*; so that wit may exist not only without the play upon words, but even without the use of them. Hogarth may be cited as an instance, who abounds in wit almost as much as he does in humour, considering the inaptitude of the language he used, or in those double allusions which throw a reflected light upon the same object, according to Collins's description of wit,

'Like jewels in his crisped hair.'

Mark Supple's calling out from the Gallery of the House of Commons —'A song from Mr. Speaker!' when Addington was in the chair and there was a pause in the debate, was undoubtedly wit, though the relation of any such absurd circumstance actually taking place, would only have been humour. A gallant calling on a courtesan (for it is fair to illustrate these intricacies how we can) observed, 'he should only make her a present every other time.' She answered, 'Then come only every other time.' This appears to me to offer a sort of touchstone to the question. The sense here is, 'Don't come unless you pay.' There is no wit in this: the wit then consists in the mode of conveying the hint: let us see into what this resolves itself. The object is to point out as strongly as can be, the absurdity of not paying; and in order to do this, an impossibility is assumed by running a

parallel on the phrases, 'paying every other time,' and 'coming every other time,' as if the coming went for nothing without paying, and thus, by the very contrast and contradiction in the terms, showing the most perfect contempt for the literal coming, of which the essence, viz. paying, was left out. It is, in short, throwing the most killing scorn upon, and fairly annihilating the coming without paying, as if it were possible to come and not to come at the same time, by virtue of an identical proposition or form of speech applied to contrary things. The wit so far, then, consists in suggesting, or insinuating indirectly, an apparent coincidence between two things, to make the real incongruity, by the recoil of the imagination, more palpable than it could have been without this feigned and artificial approximation to an union between them. This makes the difference between jest and earnest, which is essential to all wit. It is only *make-believe*. It is a false pretence set up, or the making one thing pass in supposition for another, as a foil to the truth when the mask is removed. There need not be laughter, but there must be deception and surprise: otherwise, there can be no wit. When Archer, in order to bind the robbers, suddenly makes an excuse to call out to Dorinda, 'Pray lend me your garter, Madam,' this is both witty and laughable. Had there been any propriety in the proposal or chance of compliance with it, it would no longer have been a joke: had the question been quite absurd and uncalled-for, it would have been mere impudence and folly; but it is the mixture of sense and nonsense, that is, the pretext for the request in the fitness of a garter to answer the purpose in question, and the totally opposite train of associations between a lady's garter (particularly in the circumstances which had just happened in the play) and tying a rascally robber's hands behind his back, that produces the delightful *equivoque* and unction of the passage in Farquhar. It is laughable, because the train of inquiry it sets in motion is at once on pleasant and on forbidden ground. We did not laugh in the former case—'Then only come every other time'—because it was a mere ill-natured exposure of an absurdity, and there was an end of it: but here, the imagination courses up and down along a train of ideas, by which it is alternately repelled and attracted, and this produces the natural drollery or inherent ludicrousness. It is the difference between the wit of humour and the wit of sense. Once more, suppose you take a stupid, unmeaning likeness of a face, and throwing a wig over it, stick it on a peg, to make it look like a barber's block—this is wit without words. You give that which is stupid in itself the additional accompaniments of what is still more stupid, to enhance and verify the idea by a falsehood. We know the head so placed is not a barber's block; but it might, we see, very

well pass for one. This is caricature or the *grotesque*. The face itself might be made infinitely laughable, and great humour be shown in the delineation of character: it is in combining this with other artificial and aggravating circumstances, or in the setting of this piece of lead that the wit appears.[1] RECAPITULATION. It is time to stop short in this list of digressions, and try to join the scattered threads together. We are too apt, both from the nature of language and the turn of modern philosophy, which reduces every thing to simple sensations, to consider whatever bears one name as one thing in itself, which prevents our ever properly understanding those *mixed modes* and various clusters of ideas, to which almost all language has a reference. Thus if we regard *wit* as something resembling a drop of quicksilver, or a spangle from off a cloak, a little nimble substance, that is pointed and glitters (we do not know how) we shall make no progress in analysing its varieties or its essence; it is a mere word or an atom: but if we suppose it to consist in, or be the result of, several sets and sorts of ideas combined together or acting upon each other (like the tunes and machinery of a barrel-organ) we may stand some chance of explaining and getting an insight into the process. Wit is not, then, a single idea or object, but it is one mode of viewing and representing nature, or the differences and similitudes, harmonies and discords in the links and chains of our ideas of things at large. If all our ideas were literal, physical, confined to a single impression of the object, there could be no faculty for, or possibility of, the existence of wit, for its first principle is *mocking* or making a jest of anything, and its first condition or postulate, therefore, is the distinction between jest and earnest. First of all, wit implies a jest, that is, the bringing forward a pretended or counterfeit illustration of a thing; which, being presently withdrawn, makes the naked truth more apparent by contrast. It is lessening and undermining our faith in any thing (in which the serious consists) by heightening or exaggerating the vividness of our idea of it, so as by carrying it to extremes to show the error in the first concoction, and from a received practical truth and object of grave assent, to turn it into a laughing stock to the fancy. This will apply to Archer and the lady's garter, which is ironical: but how does it connect with the comparison of Hudibras's beard to a tile, which is only an exaggeration; or the *Compagnons d'Ulysse*, which is meant for a literal and severe truth, as well as a play upon words? More generally then, wit is the conjuring up in the fancy any illustration of an idea by likeness, combination of other images, or by a form of words, that being intended to point out the *eccentricity* or

[1] The common trick of making an imitation of the human countenance with a napkin or the ends of the knuckles comes under the head of wit, not humour.

departure of the original idea from the class to which it belongs does so by referring it contingently and obliquely to a totally opposite class, where the surprise and mere possibility of finding it, proves the inherent want of congruity. Hudibras's beard is transformed (by wit) into a tile: a strong man is transformed (by imagination) into a tower. The objects, you will say, are unlike in both cases; yet the comparison in one case is meant seriously, in the other it is merely to tantalize. The imagination is serious, even to passion, and exceeds truth by laying a greater stress on the object; wit has no feeling but contempt, and exceeds truth to make light of it. In a poetical comparison there cannot be a sense of incongruity or surprise; in a witty one there must. The reason is this: It is granted stone is not flesh, a tile is not hair, but the associated feelings are alike, and naturally coalesce in one instance, and are discordant and only forced together by a trick of style in the other. But how can that be, if the objects occasioning these feelings are equally dissimilar?—Because the qualities of stiffness or squareness and colour, objected to in Hudibras's beard, are themselves peculiarities and oddities in a beard, or contrary to the nature or to our habitual notion of that class of objects; and consequently (not being natural or rightful properties of a beard) must be found in the highest degree in, and admit of, a grotesque and irregular comparison with a class of objects, of which squareness and redness[1] are the essential characteristics (as of a tile), and which can have, accordingly, no common point of union in general qualities or feeling with the first class, but where the ridicule must be just and pointed from this very circumstance, that is, from the coincidence in that one particular only, which is the flaw and singularity of the first object. On the other hand, size and strength, which are the qualities on which the comparison of a man to a tower hinges, are not repugnant to the general constitution of man, but familiarly associated with our ideas of him: so that there is here no sense of impropriety in the object, nor of incongruity or surprise in the comparison: all is grave and decorous, and instead of burlesque, bears the aspect of a loftier truth. But if strength and magnitude fall within our ordinary contemplations of man as things not out of the course of nature, whereby he is enabled, with the help of imagination, to rival a tower of brass or stone, are not littleness and weakness the counterpart of these, and subject to the same rule? What shall we say, then, to the comparison of a dwarf to a pigmy, or to Falstaff's comparison of *Silence* to 'a forked radish, or a man made after supper of a cheese-paring?' Once more then, strength and magnitude are qualities which impress the imagination in a powerful and substantive manner; if they are an excess above the

[1] A red beard is not uncommon, but it is odious.

ordinary or average standard, it is an excess to which we lend a ready and admiring belief, that is, we *will* them to be if they are not, because they *ought to be*—whereas, in the other case of peculiarity and defect, the mind is constantly at war with the impression before it; our affections do not tend that way; we will it *not* to be; reject, detach, and discard it from the object as much and as far as possible; and therefore it is, that there being no voluntary coherence but a constant repugnance between the peculiarity (as of *squareness*) and the object (as a *beard*), the idea of a beard as being both naturally and properly of a certain form and texture remains as remote as ever from that of a tile; and hence the double problem is solved, why the mind is at once surprised and not shocked by the allusion; for first, the mind being made to see a beard so unlike a beard, is glad to have the discordance increased and put beyond controversy, by comparing it to something still more unlike one, *viz.* a tile; and secondly, *squareness* never having been admitted as a desirable and accredited property of a beard as it is of a tile, by which the two classes of ideas might have been reconciled and compromised (like those of a man and a tower) through a feeling or quality common (in will) to both, the transition from one to the other continues as new and startling, that is, as witty as ever;—*which was to be demonstrated.* I think I see my way clearly so far. Wit consists in two things, the perceiving the incongruity between an object and the class to which it generally belongs, and secondly, the pointing out or making this incongruity more manifest, by transposing it to a totally different class of objects in which it is prescriptively found in perfection. The medium or link of connexion between the opposite classes of ideas is in the unlikeness of one of the things in question *to itself, i.e.* the class it belongs to: this peculiarity is the narrow bridge or line along which the fancy runs to link it to a set of objects in all other respects different from the first, and having no sort of communication, either in fact or inclination, with it, and in which the pointedness and brilliancy, or the *surprise* and *contrast* of wit consists. The faculty by which this is done is the rapid, careless decomposition and recomposition of our ideas, by means of which we easily and clearly detach certain links in the chain of our associations from the place where they stand, and where they have an infirm footing, and join them on to others, to show how little intimacy they had with the former set.

The motto of wit seems to be, *Light come, light go.* A touch is sufficient to dissever what already hangs so loose as folly, like froth on the surface of the wave; and an hyperbole, an impossibility, a pun or a nick-name will push an absurdity, which is close upon the verge of it, over the precipice. It is astonishing how much wit or laughter

there is in the world—it is one of the staple commodities of daily life —and yet, being excited by what is *out of the way* and singular, it ought to be rare, and gravity should be the order of the day. Its constant recurrence from the most trifling and trivial causes, shows that the contradiction is less to what we find things than to what we wish them to be. A circle of milliner's-girls laugh all day long at nothing, or day after day at the same things—the same cant phrase supplies the wags of the town with wit for a month—the same set of nick-names has served the *John Bull* and *Blackwood's Magazine* ever since they started. It would appear by this that its essence consisted in monotony, rather than variety. Some kind of incongruity however seems inseparable from it, either in the object or language. For instance, admiration and flattery become wit by being expressed in a quaint and abrupt way. Thus, when the dustman complimented the Duchess of Devonshire by saying, as she passed, 'I wish that lady would let me light my pipe at her eyes,' nothing was meant less than to ridicule or throw contempt, yet the speech was wit and not serious flattery. The putting a wig on a stupid face and setting it on a barber's pole is wit or humour:—the fixing a pair of wings on a beautiful figure to make it look more like an angel is poetry; so that the *grotesque* is either serious or ludicrous, as it professes to exalt or degrade. Whenever any thing is proposed to be *done* in the way of wit, it must be in mockery or jest; since if it were a probable or becoming action, there would be no drollery in suggesting it; but this does not apply to illustrations by comparison, there is here no line drawn between what is to take place and what is not to take place—they must only be extreme and unexpected. Mere nonsense, however, is not wit. For however slight the connexion, it will never do to have none at all; and the more fine and fragile it is in some respects, the more close and deceitful it should be in the particular one insisted on. Farther, mere sense is not wit. Logical subtilty or ingenuity does not amount to wit (although it may mimic it) without an immediate play of fancy, which is a totally different thing. The comparing the phrenologist's division of the same portion of the brain into the organs of form and colour to the cutting a Yorkshire pudding into two parts, and calling the one *custard* and the other *plum-cake* may pass for wit with some, but not with me. I protest (if required) against having a grain of wit.[1]

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[1] Some one compared B——, a tall, awkward country lout to Adam, who came into the world full grown, but without having ever made any use of his limbs. This was wit, though true; where then is the ingredient of incongruity? In altering the idea of Adam at pleasure, or from a mere possibility to make it answer

## PERSONAL POLITICS

'Ay, every inch a king!'

Many persons are surprised at the conduct of Charles x. in pushing things to extremities: the wonder would have been, if he had not. All the time of the *Restoration* under a charter, he was employed in thinking how to get rid of that charter, to throw off that incubus, to cancel that juggle, to breathe once more the air of divine right. Till this were done—no matter by what delays, after what length of time, by what jesuitical professions, by what false oaths, by what stratagems, by what unmasked insolence, by what loud menaces, by what violence, by what blood—the French monarch (whether Charles or Louis), felt himself 'cooped, confined, and cabined in, by saucy doubts and fears;' but this phantom of a constitution once out of the way he would be 'himself again.' He would then first cry *Vive la Charte!* without a pang—with his eyes running over, and his heart bursting with laughter. If he had a right to be *where* he was, he had a right to be *what* he was, and what he was born to be. This was the first idea instilled into his mind, the last he would forget. All else was a compromise with circumstances, a base surrender of an inalienable claim, a concession extorted under *duresse*, so much the more eagerly to be retracted, as an appearance of compliance had been the longer and more studiously kept up. A throne not founded on inherent right was a mockery and insult. All power shared with the people, sup-

a ludicrous purpose. Adam is generally supposed an active, graceful person: a lad grown up with large bones and muscles, with no more use of them than an infant, is a laughable subject, because it deranges or unhinges our customary associations. The threads of our ideas (so to speak) are strong and tightened by habit and will, just as we tighten the strings of a fiddle with pegs and screws; and when any of these are relaxed, snapped asunder, or unstrung by accident or folly, it is in taking up the odds and ends (like stitches let down) as they hang light and loose, and twisting them into some motley, ill-assorted pattern, so as to present a fantastic and glaring contrast to custom (which is plain sense) or the *ideal*, which strengthens and harmonizes (and which is poetry)—that the web of wit and humour consists. The *serious* is that which is closely cemented together by experience and prejudice, or by common sense: the ludicrous is the incoherent, or that which wants the cement of habit and purpose; and wit is employed in finding out new and opposite combinations of these detached and broken fragments (or exceptions to established rules) so as to set off the distinction between absurdity and propriety in the most lively and marked manner possible. Proof is not wanted here; illustration is enough, and the more extravagant the better; for the cause being previously condemned in our prosing judgments, we do not stand upon punctilio, but only wait for a smart, sly excuse to get rid of it; and hence *tricking is fair in wit*, as well as in war: where the justice of the cause is not the question, you have only to fight it out or make the best of the case you can.

posed to be derived from them, for which the possessor was accountable to them, held during pleasure or good behaviour, was pollution to his thoughts, odious to him as the leprosy. Be sure of this, popular right coiled round the sceptre of hereditary kings is like the viper clinging to our hands, which we shake off with fear and loathing. There is in despots (born and bred) a natural and irreconcilable antipathy to the people, and to all obligations to them. The very name of freedom is a screech-owl in their ears. They have been brought up with the idea that they were entitled to absolute power, that there was something in their blood that gave them a right to it without condition or reserve, or being called to account for the use or abuse of it; and they reject with scorn and impatience anything short of this. They will either be absolute or they will be nothing. The Bourbons for centuries had been regarded as the gods of the earth, as a superior race of beings, who had a sovereign right to trample on mankind, and crush them in their wrath or spare them in their mercy. Would Charles x. derogate from his ancestors, would he be the degenerate scion of that royal line, to wear a tarnished and dishonoured crown, to be raised by the shout of a mob, to wait the assent of a Chamber of Deputies, to owe every thing to the people, to be a king on liking and on sufferance, a sort of state prisoner in his own kingdom, shut up and spell-bound in the nick-name of a Constitution? He would as soon consent to go on all-fours. The latter would not shock his pride and prejudices more: would not be a greater degradation in his eyes, or a more total inversion of the order of nature. It is not that the successor to a despotic throne will not, but he cannot be the king of a free people: the very supposition is in his mind a contradiction in terms. It is something base and mechanical, not amounting even to the rank of a private gentleman who does what he pleases with his estate; and kings consider mankind as their estate. If a herd of overloaded asses were to turn against their drivers and demand their liberty and better usage, these could not be more astonished than the Bourbons were when the French people turned against them and demanded their rights. Will these same Bourbons, who have been rocked and cradled in the notion of arbitrary power, and of their own exclusive privileges as a separate and sacred race, who have sucked it in with their mothers' milk, who inherit it in their blood, who have nursed it in exile and in solitude, and gloated over it once more, since their return, as within their reach, ever be brought to look Liberty in the face except as a mortal and implacable foe, or ever give up the hope of removing that obstacle to all that they have been or still have a fancied right to be? The last thing that they can be convinced of will be to make them comprehend that they are *men*. This is a dis-

covery of the last forty years, that has been forced upon them in no very agreeable manner; by the beheading of more than one of their race, the banishment of the rest, by their long wanderings and unwelcome return to their own country, from whence they have been driven twice since—but up to that period they find no such levelling doctrine inscribed either in the records of history or on their crest and coat of arms or in the forms of religion or in the ancient laws and institutions of the kingdom. Which version will they then believe or turn a deaf ear to: that which represents them as God's vicegerents upon earth, or that which holds them up as the enemies of the human race and the scoff and outcasts of their country? Every, the meanest individual has a standard of estimation in his own breast, which is that he is of more importance than all the rest of the world put together; but a king is the only person with respect to whom all the rest of the world join or have ever joined in the same conclusion; and be assured that having encouraged him in this opinion, he will do every thing in his power to keep them to it till his last gasp. You have sworn to a man that he is a god: this is indeed the most solemn of compacts. Any attempt to infringe it, any breath throwing a doubt upon it, is treason, rebellion, impiety. Would you be so unjust as to retract the boon, he will not be so unjust to himself as to let you. He would sooner suffer ten deaths and forfeit twenty kingdoms than patiently submit to the indignity of having his right called in question. It is said, Charles x. is a good-natured man: it may be so, and that he would not hurt a fly; but in that quarrel he would shed the blood of millions of men. If he did not do so, he would consider himself as dead to honour, a recreant to fame, and a traitor to the cause of kings. Touch but that string, the inborn dignity of kings and their title to 'solely sovereign sway and masterdom,' and the milk of human kindness in the best-natured monarch turns to gall and bitterness. You might as well present a naked sword to his breast, as be guilty of a word or look that can bear any other construction than that of implicit homage and obedience. There is a spark of pride lurking at the bottom of his heart, however glozed over by smiles and fair speeches, ever ready (with the smallest opposition to his will) to kindle into a flame, and desolate kingdoms. Let but the voice of freedom speak, and to resist 'shall be in him remorse, what bloody work soever' be the consequence. Good-natured kings, like good-natured men, are often merely lovers of their own ease who give themselves no trouble about other people's affairs: but interfere in the slightest point with their convenience, interest, or self-love, and a tigress is not more furious in defence of her young. While the Royal Guards were massacring the citizens of Paris, Charles x. was partridge-shoot-

ing at St. Cloud, to show that the shooting of his subjects and the shooting of game were equally among the *menus plaisirs* of royalty. This is what is meant by mild paternal sway, by the perfection of a good-natured monarch, when he orders the destruction of as great a number of people as will not do what he pleases, without any discomposure of dress or features. Away with such trifling! There is no end of the confusion and mischief occasioned by the application of this mode of arguing from personal character and appearances to public measures and principles. If we are to believe the fashionable cant on this subject, a man cannot do a dirty action because he wears a clean shirt: he cannot break an oath to a nation, because he pays a gambling debt; and because he is delighted with the universal homage that is paid him, with having every luxury and every pomp at his disposal, he cannot, under the mask of courtesy and good humour, conceal designs against a Constitution, or 'smile and smile and be a *tyrant*!' Such is the logic of the *Times*. This paper, 'ever strong upon the stronger side,' laughs to scorn the very idea entertained by our 'restless and mercurial neighbours' (as if the *Times* had nothing of the *tourniquet* principle in its composition) that so amiable, so well-meaning and prosperous a gentleman as Charles x. should nourish an old and inveterate grudge against the liberties of his country or wish to overturn that happy order of things which the *Times* had so great a share in establishing. But he no sooner verifies the predictions of the French journalists and is tumbled from his throne, than the *Times* with its jolly, swaggering, *thrasonical* air falls upon him and calls him all the *vagabonds* it can get its tongue to. We do not see the wit of this, any more than of its assuring us, with unabated confidence, that there is not the least shadow of foundation for the apprehensions of those who are perverse enough to think, that a Ministry that have set up and countenanced the Continental despotisms, and uniformly shown themselves worse than indifferent to the blood and groans of thousands of victims in foreign countries (sacrificed under their guarantee of the *deliverance of mankind*) may have an *arrière-pensée* against the liberties of their own. We grant the premises of the *Times* in either case, that the French king was good-humoured and that the Duke has a vacant face; but these favourable appearances have not prevented a violent catastrophe in the one case and may not in the other. Mr. Brougham a short time ago, in a speech at a public meeting, gave his hearty approbation of the late Revolution in France, and clenched his argument by asking what fate an English monarch would merit, and probably meet, who acted in the same manner as the besotted Charles; who annulled the liberty of the press, who prevented the meeting of the representatives of the people, who disfranchised four-fifths of the

electors by an arbitrary decree, and proposed to reign without law, and raise the taxes without a Parliament? This is not exactly the point at issue. A more *home* question would be, what fate a king of England would deserve, not who did or attempted all this in his own person, but who fearing to do that, as the next best thing and to show which way his inclinations tended, aided and abetted with all the might and resources of a people calling itself free, and tried to force back upon a neighbouring state, by a long and cruel war and with the ruin of his own subjects, a king like Charles x., who by every act and circumstance of his life had shown himself hostile to the welfare and freedom of his country, and whose conduct, if repeated here, would justly incur the forfeiture of his own crown? It would be 'premature,' in the judgment of some, to give an opinion on this subject till after the thing has happened, and then it would be neither loyal nor patriotic to condemn the conduct of our own cabinet; but we hope at least that the next time the English government undertake to force a king upon the French people, they will send them a baboon instead of a Bourbon, as the less insult of the two!—To return to the question of *personal politics*. Our last king but one was a good domestic character; but this had little or nothing to do with the wisdom or folly of his public measures. He might be faithful to his conjugal vows, but might put a construction on some clause in his Coronation-oath fatal to the peace and happiness of a large part of his subjects. He might be an exceedingly well-meaning, moral man, but might have notions instilled into him in early youth respecting the prerogatives of the crown and the relation between the sovereign and the people, that might not quit him to his latest breath, and might embroil his subjects and the world in disastrous wars and controversies during his whole reign. His son succeeded him without the same reputation for domestic virtue, but adopted all the measures of his father's ministers. If the private character and the public conduct were to be submitted to the same test, this could not have happened. But the late king was cried up for his elegant accomplishments, and as the *fine gentleman* of his family; and this, with equally sound logic, atoned for the absence of less shewy qualities, and stamped his public proceedings with the character of a wise and liberal policy. We are already assured of a fortunate and peaceful reign, because the present king looks pleased and good-humoured on his accession to the crown; though the smallest cloud in the political horizon may scatter the ruddy smiles and overcast the whole prospect. Mr. Coleridge complains, somewhere, of politicians who pretend to guide the state, and yet have ruined their own affairs. Would the author of the *Ancient Mariner* apply the same rule to other things, and

affirm that no one could be a poet or a philosopher who had not made his fortune? One would suppose, that all the people of sense and worth were confessedly on one side of the question in the great disputes in religion or politics that have agitated and torn the world in pieces, and all the knaves and fools on the other. This is hardly tenable ground. Charles IX., of happy memory was we believe a good-tempered man and a most religious prince: this did not hinder him from authorising the massacre of St. Bartholomew and shooting at the Huguenots out of the palace-windows with his own hands. This was the prejudice of his time: we have still certain prejudices to contend with in ours, which have nothing to do with the looks, temper, or private character of those who hold them. We wonder at the cruelties and atrocities of religious fanatics in former times, and would not have them repeated: were none of these persecutors honest, conscientious men? Take any twelve inquisitors: six of them shall be angels and the other six scoundrels, yet they will all agree in one unanimous verdict, condemning you or me to the flames for not believing in the infallibility of the Pope. This is the thing to be avoided *by all means*; and not to lose our time in idle discussions about the amiableness of the characters of these pious exterminators, nor in admiring the fineness of their countenances, nor the picturesque effect of the scenery and *costume*. Charles X., the gay and gallant Count d'Artois, wears a hair-shirt, is fond of partridge-shooting, and wanted to put a yoke on the necks of his subjects. The last is that on which issue was joined. Let him go where he chooses, with a handsome pension; but let him not be sent back again (as he was once before) at the expense of millions of lives![1]

## EMANCIPATION OF THE JEWS

'*Player.* We have reformed that indifferently, my lord.
*Hamlet.* Oh! reform it altogether.'

THE emancipation of the Jews is but a natural step in the progress of civilisation. Laws and institutions are positive things: opinions and sentiments are variable; and it is in conforming the stubbornness and perversity of the former to the freedom and boldness of the latter, that the harmony and beauty of the social order consist. But it is

[1] Even then I should not despair. The Revolution of the Three Days was like a resurrection from the dead, and showed plainly that liberty too has a spirit of life in it; and that the hatred of oppression is 'the unquenchable flame, the worm that dies not.'

said, 'The Jews at present have few grievances to complain of; they are well off, and should be thankful for the indulgence they receive.' It is true, we no longer burn them at a stake, or plunder them of their goods: why then continue to insult and fix an idle stigma on them? At Rome a few years ago they made the Jews run races (naked) in the Corso on Good Friday. At present, they only oblige them to provide asses to run races on the same day for the amusement of the populace, and to keep up the spirit of the good old custom, though by altering it they confess that the custom was wrong, and that they are ashamed of it. They also shut up the Jews in a particular quarter of the city (called Il Ghetto Judaico), and at the same time will not suffer the English as heretics to be buried within the walls of Rome. An Englishman smiles or is scandalised at both these instances of bigotry; but if he is asked, 'Why, then, do you not yourselves emancipate the Catholics and the Jews?' he may answer, 'We *have* emancipated the one.' And why not the other? 'Because we are intolerant.' This and this alone is the reason.

We throw in the teeth of the Jews that they are prone to certain sordid vices. If they are vicious it is we who have made them so. Shut out any class of people from the path to fair fame, and you reduce them to grovel in the pursuit of riches and the means to live. A man has long been in dread of insult for no just cause, and you complain that he grows reserved and suspicious. You treat him with obloquy and contempt, and wonder that he does not walk by you with an erect and open brow.

We also object to their trades and modes of life; that is, we shut people up in close confinement and complain that they do not live in the open air. The Jews barter and sell commodities, instead of raising or manufacturing them. But this is the necessary traditional consequence of their former persecution and pillage by all nations. They could not set up a trade when they were hunted every moment from place to place, and while they could count nothing their own but what they could carry with them. They could not devote themselves to the pursuit of agriculture, when they were not allowed to possess a foot of land. You tear people up by the roots and trample on them like noxious weeds, and then make an outcry that they do not take root in the soil like wholesome plants. You drive them like a pest from city to city, from kingdom to kingdom, and then call them vagabonds and aliens.

When reason fails, the Christian religion is, as usual, called in aid of persecution. The admission of the Jews, it is said, to any place of trust or emolument in the state ought not to be sanctioned, because they expect the coming of the Messiah, and their restoration, one

day or other, to their own country: and Christianity, it is said, is part of the law of the land.

As to their exclusion because they expect the coming of the Messiah, and their restoration, one day or other, to their own country, a few words will be sufficient. Even if it is too much for a people, with this reversion in the promised land, to have a 'stake in the country' added to it; and the offer of a seat in the House of Commons is too much for any one who looks forward to a throne in the *New Jerusalem*: this objection comes with but an ill grace from the followers of him who has declared, 'My kingdom is not of this world;' and who on that plea profess to keep all the power and authority in their own hands. Suppose an attempt were made to exclude Christians from serving the office of constable, jury-man, or knight of the shire, as expressly contrary to the great principle of their religion, which inculcates an entire contempt for the things of this life, and a constant preparation for a better. Would not this be considered as an irony, and not a very civil one? Yet it is the precise counterpart of this argument. The restoration of the Jews to their own country, however firmly believed in as an article of faith, has been delayed eighteen hundred years, and may be delayed eighteen hundred more. Are they to remain indifferent to the good or evil, to the respectability or odium that may attach to them all this while? The world in general do not look so far; and the Jews have not been accused, more than others, of sacrificing the practical to the speculative. But according to this objection, there can be no amalgamation of interests with a people of such fantastic principles and abstracted ties; they cannot care how soon a country goes to ruin, which they are always on the point of quitting. Suppose a Jew to have amassed a large fortune in the last war, and to have laid by money in the funds, and built himself a handsome house in the neighbourhood of the metropolis; would he be more likely by his vote in the House of Commons to promote a revolution, so as to cause a general bankruptcy; or to encourage the mob to pull down his house, or root up his favourite walks, because after all, at the end of several centuries, he and the rest of his nation indulge in the prospect of returning to their own country? The most clear-sighted John Bull patriotism hardly reaches beyond ourselves and our heirs.

As to the assertion that Christianity is part of the law of the land, as Popery is a part of the law of the land at Rome, and a good reason for hunting Jews and refusing Christian burial to Protestants, by whom is it made? Not by our Divines. They do not distrust the power of our religion; and they will tell you that if Christianity, as sanctioning these cruelties or any miserable remnant of them, is part

of the law of the land, then the law of the land is no part of Christianity. They do not forget the original character of the Jewish people, and will not say any thing against it. We and modern Europe derived from them the whole germ of our civilisation, our ideas on the unity of the Deity, or marriage, on morals,

'And pure religion breathing household Laws.'

The great founder of the Christian religion was himself born among that people, and if the Jewish Nation are still to be branded with his death, it might be asked on what principle of justice ought we to punish men for crimes committed by their co-religionists near two thousand years ago? That the Jews, as a people, persist in their blindness and obstinacy is to be lamented; but it is at least, under the circumstances, a proof of their sincerity; and as adherents to a losing cause, they are entitled to respect and not contempt. Is it the language of Lawyers? They are too intelligent, and, in the present times, not favourers of hypocrisy. They know that this law is not on our statute book, and if it were, that it would be law as long as it remained there and no longer; they know that the supposition originated in the unadvised dictum of a Judge, and, if it had been uttered by a Puritan Divine, it would have been quoted at this day as a specimen of puritanical nonsense and bigotry. Religion cannot take on itself the character of law without ceasing to be religion; nor can law recognise the obligations of religion for its principles, nor become the pretended guardian and protector of the faith, without degenerating into inquisitorial tyranny.

The proposal to admit Jews to a seat in Parliament in this country is treated as an irony or a burlesque on the Catholic question. At the same time, it is said to be very proper and rational in France and America, Denmark and the Netherlands, because there, though they are nominally admitted, court influence excludes them in the one, and popular opinion in the other, so that the law is of no avail: that is, in other words, in England as there is neither court-influence nor popular prejudice; and as every thing in this country is done by money alone, the Stock Exchange would soon buy up the House of Commons, and if a single Jew were admitted, the whole would shortly be a perfect Sanhedrim. This is a pleasant account of the spirit of English patriotism, and the texture of the House of Commons. All the wealth of the Jews cannot buy them a single seat there; but if a certain formal restriction were taken off, Jewish gold would buy up the fee simple of the consciences, prejudices and interests of the country, and turn the kingdom *topsy-turvy*. Thus the bedrid imagination of prejudice sees some dreadful catastrophe in

every improvement, and no longer feeling the ground of custom under its feet, fancies itself on an abyss of ruin and lawless change. How truly has it been said of prejudice, 'that it has the singular ability of accommodating itself to all the possible varieties of the human mind. Some passions and vices are but thinly scattered among mankind, and find only here and there a fitness of reception. But prejudice, like the spider, makes every where its home. It has neither taste nor choice of place, and all that it requires is room. There is scarcely a situation, except fire and water, in which a spider will not live. So let the mind be as naked as the walls of an empty and forsaken tenement, gloomy as a dungeon, or ornamented with the richest abilities of thinking; let it be hot, cold, dark or light, lonely or inhabited, still prejudice, if undisturbed, will fill it with cobwebs, and live like the spider, where there seems nothing to live on. If the one prepares her food by poisoning it to her palate and her use, the other does the same; and as several of our passions are strongly characterised by the animal world, prejudice may be denominated the spider of the mind.'

Three hundred years ago all this was natural and in order, because it accorded with the prejudices of the time; now it is absurd and Gothic, because it is contrary to men's reason and feelings. Hatred is the food and growth of ignorance. While we know nothing but ourselves and our own notions, we can conceive of nothing else as possible; and every deviation from our practice or opinions gives a shock to our faith that nothing can expiate but blows. Those who differ from us in the smallest particular are considered as of a different species, and we treat them accordingly. But this barrier of prejudice, which is founded on ignorance, is thrown down by the diffusion of light and knowledge; nor can any thing build it up again. In the good old times a Jew was regarded by the vulgar and their betters as a sort of monster, a *lusus naturæ* whose existence they could not account for, and would not tolerate. The only way to get rid of the obnoxious opinion was to destroy the *man*. Besides, in those dark ages, they wanted some object of natural antipathy, as in country places they get a strange dog or an idiot to hunt down and be the bugbear of the village. But it is the test of reason and refinement to be able to subsist without bugbears. While it was supposed that 'the Jews eat little children,' it was proper to take precautions against them. But why keep up ill names and the ill odour of a prejudice when the prejudice has ceased to exist? It has long ceased amongst the reflecting part of the community; and, although the oldest prejudices are, it is to be lamented, preserved longest in the highest places, and governments have been slow to learn good manners, we

cannot but be conscious that these errors are passing away. We begin to see, if we do not fully see, that we have no superiority to boast of but reason and philosophy, and that it is well to get rid of vulgar prejudices and nominal distinctions as fast as possible.

## ON THE PUNISHMENT OF DEATH

The view which has been taken of the subject by Beccaria and other modern writers appears to be erroneous or defective in some of the most important circumstances relating to this question.

*First objection.* It is assumed as a general maxim, that, 'it is not the intensity of punishment, but its duration, which makes the greatest impression on the human mind.'

This maxim will be found to be in direct opposition to all experience, and to every principle of human nature. It supposes that a number of impressions, feeble in themselves, and dissipated over a long interval of time, produce a stronger effect upon the mind, than a single object, however powerful and striking, presented to it at once: that is, that the passions are excited more by reason than imagination, by the real, than by the apparent quantity of good or evil. This principle is indeed, in general, denied by Mr. Bentham, but admitted by him, as far as relates to the influence of the fear of death on malefactors. If it be true with respect to them in particular (which there is reason to doubt,) it is not because the fear of a continued punishment influences them more than the fear of an intense one, but because death is to them not an intense punishment.

Again, it has been said, that 'crimes are more effectually prevented by the certainty than by the severity of the punishment.' Now I cannot think that this is either self-evident, or true universally and in the abstract. It is not true of human nature in general, and it is still less so as applied to the more lawless and abandoned classes of the community. It is evident from the very character of such persons, that if they are not to be acted upon by violent motives, by what appeals strongly to their imagination and their passions, they cannot be acted upon at all, they are out of the reach of all moral discipline. The dull, sober certainties of common life, and the real consequences of things when set in competition with any favourite inclination, or vicious indulgence, they altogether despise. It is only when the certainty of punishment is immediate, obvious, and connected with circumstances, which strike upon the imagination, that it operates effectually in the prevention of crimes. This principle is however true, as it has been sometimes applied to cases where the law has become a dead

letter. *When a moderate punishment is strictly and vigorously enforced, and a severe punishment is as generally and systematically evaded, the mind will, undoubtedly, be more affected by what it considers as a serious reality, than by what it will regard as an idle threat.* So far the principle is true in its application, but no farther.

*First maxim.* It is not the *real*, but the apparent severity of the punishment which most effectually deters from the commission of crimes. For this reason, an intense punishment will have more effect than a continued one, because more easily apprehended. Neither is the certainty of punishment to be depended on, except when it is apparent. *It is not the calculation of consequences, but their involuntary and irresistible impression on the mind that produces action. The laws to prevent crimes must appeal to the passions of men, and not to their reason: for crimes proceed from passion, and not from reason. If men were governed by reason, laws would be unnecessary.*

*Second objection.* It seems to be taken for granted by speculative writers, (at least the contrary is not stated with sufficient distinctness) that punishment operates by terror alone, or by the fear which each individual has of the consequences to himself.

It is indeed a prevailing maxim of philosophy, that self-interest is the sole spring of action, and it has thus probably been inferred, that the fear of punishment could only operate on this principle of cool, calculating self-interest. But it is quite certain that sympathy with others, whatever may be its origin, is, practically speaking, an independent and powerful principle of action. The opinions and feelings of others do actually and constantly influence our conduct, in opposition to our strongest interests and inclinations. That punishment, therefore, will not be the most dreaded, nor, consequently, the most effectual, which is the greatest to the individual, unless it is at the same time thought so by others, and expresses the greatest general disapprobation of the crime. Thus, though a malefactor, consulting only his own inclinations or feelings, might prefer death to perpetual imprisonment and hard labour, yet he may regard it as the worst of punishments, in as far as it demonstrates the greatest abhorrence and indignation in the community against the crime.

*Second maxim.* Punishment operates by sympathy, as well as by terror. Penal laws have a tendency to repress crimes not more by exciting a dread of the consequences, than by marking the strong sense entertained by others of their enormity, and the detestation in which they are held by mankind in general. The most severe laws will always be the most effectual, as long as they are expressions of the public sentiment; but they will become ineffectual, in proportion as the sentiment is wanting. The disproportion between the crime

and the punishment in the public opinion, will then counteract the dread of the severity of the law. Setting this feeling aside, the most severe laws will be the most effectual. The argument drawn from the inefficacy of severe punishments, when inflicted on trifling or common offences, does not prove that they must be ineffectual, when applied to great crimes, which rouse the public indignation and justify the severity.

*Third objection.* It is farther implied in the foregoing statements, that the only object of punishment is to prevent actual crimes, or that those laws are the best, which most effectually answer this end by deterring criminals.

This I also conceive to be a narrow and imperfect view of the question, which respects not merely the motives and conduct of criminals, but the motives and sentiments of the community at large. It is of the first importance that the ill disposed should be coerced, but it is also of importance that they should be coerced in such a manner, and by such means, as it is most consistent with the public morals to employ. In defending the state, we are not to forget that the state ought to be worth defending. As the sentiments of society have a powerful effect in enforcing the laws, so the laws re-act powerfully on the sentiments of society. This is evident with respect to barbarous punishments. The evil of a law operating in this way on manners, by holding out an example of cruelty and injustice, however effectual it might be found, is not denied. In like manner, a law falling short of or disappointing the just indignation and moral sense of the community, is, for the same reason, faulty as one that exceeds and outrages it. One end of punishment, therefore, is to satisfy this natural sense of justice in the public mind, and to strengthen the opinion of the community by its act. As the arm of justice ought not to be mocked and baffled by the impunity of offences, so neither ought it to be unnerved by thwarting and prevaricating with the common sentiments of mankind, or by substituting remote, indirect, and artificial punishments for obvious and direct ones. I call a punishment natural when it is dictated by the *passion* excited against the crime. A punishment will therefore be the most beneficial when it arises out of, and co-operates with that strong sense of right or wrong, that firm and healthy tone of public sentiment, which is the best preservative against crime.

*Illustration.* Thus even if it were shewn that perpetual imprisonment and hard labour would be equally effectual in deterring malefactors from the commission of murder, it would by no means necessarily follow, that this mode of punishment would be preferable to capital punishment, unless it could at the same time be made to

appear that it would equally enforce the principle of the connexion between the crime and the punishment, or the rule of natural justice, by which he who shews himself indifferent to the life of another, forfeits his own. There is a natural and home-felt connexion between the hardened obduracy which has shewn itself insensible to the cries of another for mercy and the immediate burst of indignation which dooms the criminal to feel that he has no claims on the pity of others: but there is no connexion, because there is no ascertainable proportion, in the mind either of the criminal or the public, between the original crime, and the additional half-hour in the day after the lapse of twenty years, which the malefactor is condemned to labour, or the lash of the whip which urges him to complete his heavy task. That reasoning which stops the torrent of public indignation, and diverts it from its object only to dole it out to its miserable victim, drop by drop, and day by day, through a long protracted series of time with systematic, deliberate, unrelenting severity, is in fact neither wise nor humane. Punishments of this kind may be so contrived as to intimidate the worst part of mankind, but they will also be the aversion of the best, and will confound and warp the plain distinctions between right and wrong.

*Third maxim.* The end of punishment is not only to prevent actual crimes, but to form a standard of public opinion, and to confirm and sanction the moral sentiments of the community. The mode and degree of the punishment ought, therefore, to be determined with a view to this object, as well as with a view to the regulation of the police.

*Fourth objection.* The theory here alluded to, is farther objectionable in this, that it makes familiarity with the punishment essential to its efficacy, and therefore recommends those punishments, the example of which is the most lasting, and, as it were, constantly before the eyes of the public, as the most salutary. On the contrary, those punishments are the best which require the least previous familiarity with objects of guilt and misery to make them formidable, which come least into contact with the mind, which tell at a distance, the bare mention of which startles the ear, which operate by an imaginary instead of an habitual dread, and which produce their effect once for all, without destroying the erectness and elasticity of social feeling by the constant spectacle of the degradation of the species. No one would wish to have a gibbet placed before his door, to deter his neighbours from robbing him. Punishments which require repeated ocular inspection of the evils which they occasion, cannot answer their end in deterring individuals, without having first operated as a penance on society. They are a public benefit only so far as they are a public nuisance. Laws framed entirely on this

principle, would convert the world into a large prison, and divide mankind into two classes, felons and their keepers!

*Maxim fourth.* Those punishments are the best which produce the strongest apprehension, with the least actual suffering or contemplation of evil. Such is in general the effect of those punishments which appeal to the imagination, rather than to our physical experience; which are immediately connected with a principle of honour, with the passions in general, with natural antipathies, the fear of pain, the fear of death, etc. These punishments are, in Mr. Bentham's phrase, the most *economical*; they do their work with the least expense of individual suffering, or abuse of public sympathy. Private punishments are, so far, preferable to public ones.

*General inference.* There ought to be a gradation of punishments proportioned to the offence, and adapted to the state of society.

In order to strike the imagination and excite terror, severe punishments ought not to be common.[1]

To be effectual, from the sympathy of mankind in the justice of the sentence, the highest punishments ought not to be assigned to the lowest or to very different degrees of guilt. The absence of the sanction of public opinion not only deadens the execution of the law, but by giving confidence to the offender, produces that sort of resistance to it, which is always made to oppression. The ignominy attached to the sentence of the law, is thus converted into pity. If the law is enacted but not enforced, this must either be to such a degree as to take away the terror of the law, or if the terror still remains, it will be a terror of injustice, which will necessarily impair the sense of right and wrong in the community. But if the law is regularly carried into execution, the effect will be still worse. In general, all laws are bad which are not seconded by the manners of the people, and laws are not in conformity with the manners of the people when they are not executed. This is the case at present with a great proportion of the English laws. Is it to be wondered at that they should be so? Manners have changed, and will always change insensibly, and irresistibly, from the force of circumstances. The laws, as things of positive institution, remain the same. So that without a constant, gradual assimilation of the laws to the manners, the manners will, in time, necessarily become at variance with the laws, and will render them odious, ineffectual, and mischievous—a clog, instead of a furtherance to the wheels of justice.

[1] 'In Scotland, at an execution, all appear melancholy, many shed tears, and some faint away. But executions there are very rare.'—*Burgh.*

# NOTES

# NOTES

## FUGITIVE WRITINGS

### THE FIGHT.

First republished in *Literary Remains*, vol. II. p. 193. For another account of the fight and, more particularly, of the journey home, see P. G. Patmore's *My Friends and Acquaintance*, III. 41, *et seq.* The fight (between Hickman, the 'Gas-man' and Bill Neat) took place on Dec. 11, 1821. For an account of Tom Hickman (who was thrown from a chaise and killed in the following December) see Pierce Egan's *Boxiana*, where particulars will be found of all the 'Fancy' heroes referred to by Hazlitt in this essay.

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1. '*The fight*,' *etc.* Cf. *Hamlet*, Act II. Sc. 2.
   *Jack Randall's.* Cf. vol. VI. (*Table Talk*), note to p. 202.
   '*The proverb . . . musty.*' Cf. *Hamlet*, Act III. Sc. 2.
2. *Jo. Toms.* Joseph Parkes (1796-1865), the Radical politician, at that time articled to a London solicitor.
   '*So carelessly*,' *etc.* *As You Like It*, Act I. Sc. 1.
   *Jack Pigott.* P. G. Patmore.
   '*What more felicity*,' *etc.* Spenser, *Muiopotmos*, st. 27.
   *Tom Belcher's.* Tom Belcher (1783-1854), a younger brother of the better known prize-fighter, James Belcher, kept the 'Castle' tavern in Holborn.
   '*Well, we meet at Philippi.*' Cf. *Julius Cæsar*, Act IV. Sc. 3.
3. '*I follow Fate*,' *etc.* Cf. Dryden, *The Indian Emperor*, IV. 3.
4. *Tom Turtle.* According to the author's son (see *Literary Remains*, II. 201) this was John Thurtell (1794-1824), afterwards notorious as the murderer of Weare.
   '*Quite chap-fallen.*' *Hamlet*, Act V. Sc. 1.
   *Martin.* Jack Martin, known as 'The Master of the Rolls.'
   *Mr. Richmond.* Bill Richmond, presumably, the veteran coloured hero, who had recently taken to teaching the art of boxing.
   '*Where good digestion*,' *etc.* *Macbeth*, Act III. Sc. 4.
5. '*Follows so*,' *etc.* *Henry V.*, Act IV. Sc. 1.
   '*More figures*,' *etc.* Cf. *Julius Cæsar*, Act II. Sc. 1.
   '*His dream*,' *etc.* Cf. *Othello*, Act III. Sc. 3.
   '*Seriously inclined.*' Cf. *Ibid.* Act I. Sc. 3.
6. '*A lusty man*,' *etc.* Cf. *Canterbury Tales*, Prologue, 167.
7. '*Standing*,' *etc.* *Henry V.*, Act III. Sc. 1.
   '*He moralised*,' *etc.* Cf. *As You Like It*, Act II. Sc. 1.
   '*A firebrand like Bardolph's.*' *1 Henry IV.*, Act II. Sc. 2.
   '*Loud and furious fun.*' Cf. 'The mirth and fun grew fast and furious.' Burns, *Tam O'Shanter*.

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7. *Cribb's beating Jem, etc.* Cribb defeated Jem Belcher twice, in 1807 and 1809. Belcher had lost an eye in 1803 through an accident when playing at rackets.

8. *Gully.* John Gully (1783-1863), afterwards well known in the racing world, had retired from the ring in 1808 after two victories over Bob Gregson.
'*Alas!*' *etc.* Cf. 'Alas! Leviathan is not so tamed.' Cowper, *The Task*, II. 322.

9. *The Game Chicken.* Henry Pearce (1777-1809).
'*That man was made to mourn.*' The title and refrain of 'A Dirge' by Burns.

10. '*Between the acting,*' *etc.* *Julius Cæsar*, Act II. Sc. 1.
'*With Atlantean shoulders,*' *etc.* *Paradise Lost*, II. 306.

11. '*Grinned horrible,*' *etc.* *Ibid.* II. 846.
'*Like two clouds,*' *etc.* Cf. *Ibid.* II. 714-716.

12. *Jackson.* Presumably John Jackson (1769-1845), the well-known pugilist (retired 1803), known as 'Gentleman Jackson.'
Note. *Scroggins.* Jack Scroggins, another well-known prizefighter.
Note. '*In doleful dumps,*' *etc.* *Chevy-Chace*, st. 50.

13. *Procul este profani.* *Æneid*, VI. 258.

14. *Ned Turner.* Ned Turner (1791-1826), the conqueror of Scroggins.
*Broughton and George Stevenson.* Jack Broughton's (1704-1789) fight with George Stevenson 'The Coachman,' took place, not in 1770, but in 1741.

## MERRY ENGLAND

First republished in *Sketches and Essays.*

16. '*I have been merry,*' *etc.* Cf. 2 *Henry IV.*, Act V. Sc. 3.
'*He chirped over his cups.*' *Rabelais.* See vol. I. (*The Round Table*), p. 52.
'*There were pippins,*' *etc.* Sir Hugh Evans in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, Act I. Sc. 2.
'*Continents,*' *etc.* Hobbes, *Human Nature* (*Works*, ed. Molesworth, IV. 50).
'*They . . . amused themselves,*' *etc.* Cf. vol. I. (*The Round Table*), note to p. 100.
'*Eat,*' *etc.* *S. Luke* XII. 19.

17. '*Hair-breadth 'scapes.*' *Othello*, Act I. Sc. 3.
*Old Lord's cricket-ground.* Hazlitt refers to the original 'Lord's,' established about 1782 by Thomas Lord, on the site now occupied by Dorset Square, where the game continued to be played till 1810. The present 'Lord's,' dates from 1814.

18. '*A cry more tuneable,*' *etc.* Cf. *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Act IV. Sc. 1.
Note. '*The gentle and free passage of arms at Ashby.*' Described by Scott in *Ivanhoe*, chap. viii.

19. '*Brothers of the angle.*' *The Compleat Angler*, part I. chap. i.
'*The Cockney character,*' *etc.* This sentence was omitted in *Sketches and Essays.*

20. '*Book of Sports.*' James I.'s declaration (1618) authorising certain forms of recreation after divine service on Sundays. The declaration was republished by Charles I. in 1633.
'*And e'en on Sunday,*' *etc.* Burns, *Tam O'Shanter.*
*Gilray's shop-window.* Miss Humphrey's shop, 29 St. James's Street, where James Gilray (1757-1815), the caricaturist, spent the last years of his life, and where his works were on view. *Sketches and Essays* prints 'Fore's shop-window.'

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22. '*Merry and wise.*' 'Tis good to be merry and wise,' a frequently quoted old proverb.
'*That under Heav'n,*' *etc.* *The Faerie Queene*, I. vii. 32. Cf. also Marlowe's *Tamburlaine the Great*, Part II. Act IV. Sc. 4.

24. *Nell, etc.* Nell in *The Devil to Pay*; Little Pickle in *The Spoil'd Child*, a part created by Mrs. Jordan, March 22, 1790; Lingo in *The Agreeable Surprise*; Nipperkin in *Sprigs of Laurel*, a part created by Munden, May 11, 1793; old Dornton in *The Road to Ruin*; Ranger in *The Suspicious Husband*; the Copper Captain in *Rule a Wife and Have a Wife*, one of Lewis's great parts; Filch in *The Beggar's Opera*; Hodge in *Love in a Village*; Flora in *The Wonder*; Lady Grace in *The Provoked Husband.*
'*Tut!*' *etc.* Cf. *Cymbeline*, Act III. Sc. 4.
'*What 's our Britain,*' *etc.* *Ibid.*

25. *As I write this, etc.* See vol. IX. (*Notes of a Journey through France and Italy*), pp. 281 *et seq.*
'*And gaudy butterflies,*' *etc.* Cf. Gay, *The Beggar's Opera*, Act I. Sc. 1.
'*All appliances,*' *etc.* 2 *Henry IV.*, Act III. Sc. 1.

## ON PERSONS ONE WOULD WISH TO HAVE SEEN

Republished in *Literary Remains* and *Winterslow.*

26. '*Come like shadows,*' *etc.* *Macbeth*, Act IV. Sc. 1.
*B——.* B—— here and throughout the essay is Lamb. The essay professes to describe a conversation which took place at one of Lamb's 'Wednesdays' at 16 Mitre Court Buildings, where Lamb resided from 1801 to 1809. Hazlitt (p. 27) describes the conversation as having taken place 'twenty years ago.'
*The defence of Guy Faux.* See vol. XI. pp. 317 *et seq.* and notes.
'*Never so sure,*' *etc.* Cf. Pope, *Moral Essays*, II. 51-2.
*A——.* Here and throughout the essay William Ayrton (1777-1858), the musician.

27. '*In his habit,*' *etc.* *Hamlet*, Act III. Sc. 4.
*Fulke Greville.* See vol. V. (*Lectures on the Age of Elizabeth*), p. 231 and note, and Lamb's *Specimens of English Dramatic Poets.*
'*And call up him,*' *etc.* *Il Penseroso*, 109-110.

28. *Wished that mankind, etc.* *Religio Medici*, Part II. Sec. ix.
*The portrait prefixed to the old edition.* Mr. W. C. Hazlitt, in *Memoirs, etc.* (1867), vol. I. p. 276 note, suggests that Hazlitt refers to the 12mo edition of 1669 which Lamb possessed.
'*Here lies a She-Sun,*' *etc.* *Poems* ('Muses Library') I. 86, *Epithalamion on the Lady Elizabeth and Count Palatine.*

29. '*Lisped in numbers,*' *etc.* Pope, *Prologue to the Satires*, 128.

30. *His interview with Petrarch, etc.* The editor of *The New Monthly Magazine* adds a footnote: 'Query, did they ever meet?' Chaucer was in Italy in 1372-3, and may have met Petrarch. Cf. *The Canterbury Tales*, The Clerk's Prologue, to which Hazlitt no doubt refers. Chaucer may have met Boccaccio also.
*A fine portrait of Ariosto.* Hazlitt possibly refers to the 'Portrait of a Poet' in the National Gallery, now ascribed to Palma. Titian's portrait of Aretine is in the Pitti Gallery.
'*The mighty dead.*' Thomson, *The Seasons*, *Winter*, 432.
'*A creature,*' *etc.* Cf. *Comus*, 299-301.

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30. '*That was Arion,*' *etc.* *The Faerie Queene*, IV. xi. 23.
*Captain C.* Captain Burney; M. C., Martin Burney. See vol. VI. *Table-Talk*, note to p. 209.

31. *Miss D——.* In *Literary Remains* this name is given as 'Mrs. Reynolds,' presumably the lady who had been Lamb's schoolmistress. See Lamb's *Letters*, ed. W. C. Hazlitt, I. 121.
*A harsh, croaking voice.* Not to be identified. As to Johnson's life during 1745-6 see Boswell's *Life* (ed. G. B. Hill), I. 176 and notes.
'*With lack-lustre eye.*' *As You Like It*, Act II. Sc. 7.
'*Despise low joys,*' *etc.* *Imitations of Horace, Epistles*, I. vi. (to Mr. Murray), 60-62.
'*Conspicuous scene,*' *etc.* *Ibid.* 50-53.
'*Why rail they then,*' *etc.* *Epilogue to the Satires*, II. 138-9.

32. '*But why then publish,*' *etc.* *Prologue to the Satires*, 135-146.
*E——.* In *Literary Remains* and *Winterslow* this blank is filled with the name of 'Erasmus Phillips,' but Hazlitt must refer to Lamb's lifelong friend, Edward Phillips, secretary to Speaker Abbott (see Lamb's *Letters*, ed. W. C. Hazlitt, I. 76; II. 346), or, possibly, to Colonel Phillips (*Ibid.* II. 148, 346).

33. '*Nigh-sphered in Heaven.*' Collins, Ode, *On the Poetical Character*, 66.
*J. F——.* According to *Literary Remains* this was Barron Field (1786-1846).

34. '*A vast species alone.*' Cowley, *The Praise of Pindar*, l. 2.
*G——.* Godwin, according to *Literary Remains.*
*Eugene Aram.* Eugene Aram (1704-1759), hanged in 1759 for the murder of Daniel Clark several years earlier at Knaresborough.
*H——.* *Literary Remains* reads 'Hunt.'

35. *The Duchess of Bolton.* Lavinia Fenton (1708-1760), the original Polly, married the third Duke of Bolton in 1751.
*Captain Sentry.* See *The Spectator*, No. 2.

36. *Giotto, etc.* Giotto di Bondone (d. 1337), Giovanni Cimabue (? 1240-? 1302), and Domenico Bigardi (1449-1494), known as Ghirlandaio—three of the most famous early Florentine masters.
'*Whose names,*' *etc.* See vol. X. (*Contributions to the Edinburgh Review*), note to p. 63.

37. *The Duchess of Newcastle.* Lamb is never tired of praising her. See, *e.g.*, *The Two Races of Men* (Elia).
*Mrs. Hutchinson.* Lucy Hutchinson (b. 1620). Her Life of her husband, Colonel Hutchison, was first published in 1806.
*One in the room, etc.* Mary Lamb.
*Ninon de l'Enclos.* Ninon de Lenclos (1616-1706), the famous beauty.
'*Your most exquisite reason.*' Cf. *Twelfth Night*, Act II. Sc. 3.
*G——.* Godwin, according to *Literary Remains.*
'*Oh! ever right,*' *etc.* Cf. *Coriolanus*, Act II. Sc. 1.
'*There is only one other person,*' *etc.* It should be noted that *Literary Remains* and *Winterslow* wrongly attribute this speech to Lamb. The Magazine clearly gives it to H——, that is, to Leigh Hunt. It is, of course, conceivable that the editor of *Literary Remains* silently corrected an error in the Magazine, but that does not seem likely, because, in the first place, the speech seems more characteristic of Hunt than of Lamb, and, secondly, because the volume of the *New Monthly* (XVI.) in which the essay appeared contains a list of errata in which two corrections (one of them relating to initials) are made in the essay and yet this 'H——' is left uncorrected.

# NOTES

## ON THE CONVERSATION OF LORDS

Published in *Sketches and Essays*.

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38. '*An infinite deal of nothing.*' *The Merchant of Venice*, Act I. Sc. I.

39. '*The wish*,' *etc.* 2 *Henry IV.*, Act IV. Sc. 5.

40. '*Bestow his tediousness.*' Cf. *Much Ado About Nothing*, Act III. Sc. 5.

41. '*Treatise on Horsemanship.*' The Duke of Newcastle (1592-1676), husband of Lamb's favourite (see *ante*, note to p. 37), wrote two works on horsemanship, (i) *La Methode et Invention Nouvelle de dresser les Chevaux* (Antwerp, 1657), and (ii) *A New Method and Extraordinary Invention to Dress Horses, etc.* (1667). Hazlitt probably refers to the first, which was published in English with 43 plates in vol. I. of *A General System of Horsemanship* (1743).

'*A question*,' *etc.* 1 *Henry IV.*, Act II. Sc. 4.

'*The act*' [art], *etc.* *Henry V.*, Act I. Sc. I.

42. '*The feast of reason*,' *etc.* Pope, *Imitations of Horace*, Satire I. l. 128.

'*Catch glimpses*,' *etc.* Cf. Wordsworth's sonnet 'The world is too much with us,' etc.

43. '*Face to face*,' *etc.* Cf. 1 *Corinthians* xiii. 12.

'*With jealous leer malign.*' *Paradise Lost*, IV. 503.

'*Best can feel them*,' *etc.* 'He best can paint them who shall feel them most.' Pope, *Eloisa to Abelard*, 366.

*The Roxburgh Club.* Founded in 1812 to celebrate the sale of the third Duke of Roxburgh's great library.

'*With sparkling eyes*,' *etc.* Cf. Watts, *Hymns and Spiritual Songs*, Book II. Hymn 65.

44. '*Pure in the last recesses*,' *etc.* Cf. Dryden, *Translations from Persius*, Sat. II. l. 133.

'*Or write*,' *etc.* Cf. Pope, *Epilogue to the Satires*, I. 137.

45. '*Held on their way*,' *etc.* See vol. IV. (*Reply to Malthus*), note to p. 42.

'*The labour*,' *etc.* *Macbeth*, Act II. Sc. 3.

46. '*From every work*,' *etc.* *The Faerie Queen*, I. iv. 20.

*Otium cum dignitate.* Cicero, *Pro P. Sestio*, c. 45.

*N——.* Probably Northcote.

*A celebrated critic.* ? Jeffrey, whom Hazlitt had visited at Craigcrook.

47. '*That there are powers*,' *etc.* Wordsworth, *Expostulation and Reply*, 21-24.

50. '*A man's mind*,' *etc.* Cf. *Antony and Cleopatra*, III. 13.

*The Letter to Sir William Wyndham.* Published by Mallet in 1753.

*Lord Bolingbroke had, it seems, etc.* This cannot be true, though Chatham's admiration of Bolingbroke's eloquence is well known.

'*As if a man*,' *etc.* *Coriolanus*, V. 3.

## ON A SUN-DIAL

First republished in *Sketches and Essays*, where it is said to have been written in Italy in 1825.

51. '*To carve out dials*,' *etc.* 3 *Henry VI.*, Act II. Sc. 5.

52. '*Morals on the time.*' Cf. *As You Like it*, Act II. Sc. 7.

54. '*How sweet the moonlight*,' *etc.* *The Merchant of Venice*, Act V. Sc. I.

*The account given by Rousseau, etc.* Hazlitt is probably referring to a somewhat similar story told in *Les Confessions*, Partie II. Livre XI.

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55. '*Allons, mon fils*,' *etc.* *Les Confessions*, Partie I. Livre I.
'*Lend it*,' *etc.* Cf. *Hamlet*, Act I. Sc. 2.
'*With its brazen throat*,' *etc.* Cf. *King John*, Act III. Sc. 3.
'*Swinging slow*,' *etc.* *Il Penseroso*, 76.

56. *Even George IV.*, *etc.* This sentence is omitted in *Sketches and Essays*.
'*The poor man's only music*.' Coleridge, *Frost at Midnight*, 29.

57. *Goes to church*, *etc.* Cf. *Twelfth Night*, Act I. Sc. 3.
'*Sing those witty rhymes*,' *etc.* Cf. Wordsworth, *The Fountain*, 13-15.

58. '*As in a map*,' *etc.* Cowper, *The Task*, VI. 17.
'*With light-winged toys*,' *etc.* Cf. *Othello*, Act I. Sc. 3.
'*Diana and her fawn*,' *etc.* Hazlitt seems to be quoting from himself. See vol. IX. p. 107.

59. '*With lack-lustre eye*.' *As You Like It*, Act II. Sc. 7.
*I have done something of the kind before.* Hazlitt probably refers to the sketch of his father in 'My First Acquaintance with Poets' (*post*, pp. 262-3). Cf. also vol. III. (*Political Essays*), pp. 265-6.

## WHY THE HEROES OF ROMANCE ARE INSIPID

Published in *Sketches and Essays*.

60. '*To gild refined gold*,' *etc.* *King John*, Act IV. Sc. 2.
'*Faultless monsters*.' John Sheffield, Duke of Buckingham, *Essay on Poetry*.

61. *The grand Cyruses, the Artamenes.* Mlle. de Scudéry's *Artamène ou le Grand Cyrus* was published in 10 vols., 1649-53.
*Oroondates.* In La Calprenède's *Cassandra*.
'*Mistress' eyebrow*.' *As You Like It*, Act II. Sc. 7.

62. '*Be mine*,' *etc.* Gray, *Letters* (ed. Tovey), I. 97.
'*The Princess of Cleves*.' By Madame de la Fayette (1678).
*The Duke de Nemours.* In *La Princesse de Clèves*.
'*Ugly all over*,' *etc.* See vol. II. (*Life of Holcroft*), note to p. 130.

64. *Narcissa and Emily Gauntlet.* Narcissa in *Roderick Random*; Emily Gauntlet in *Peregrine Pickle*; Winifred Jenkins in *Humphry Clinker*.
'*Her heroes*,' *etc.* Cf. 'Most women have no characters at all.' Pope, *Moral Essays*, II. 2.
*Theodore, Valancourt.* Theodore in *The Romance of the Forest*; Valancourt in *The Mysteries of Udolpho*.

65. *Miss Milner.* Miss Milner and Dorriforth in *A Simple Story* (1791); Lord Norwynne in *Nature and Art* (1796).

67. '*All germins*,' *etc.* *King Lear*, Act III. Sc. 2.
'*Tears such as angels shed* [weep].' *Paradise Lost*, I. 620.

## THE SHYNESS OF SCHOLARS

Republished in *Literary Remains*.

68. '*And of his port*,' *etc.* *The Canterbury Tales.* The Prologue, 69.
'*If you have not seen*,' *etc.* Cf. *As You Like It*, Act III. Sc. 2.

70. '*Fools rush in*,' *etc.* Pope, *An Essay on Criticism*, III. 625.

71. '*In peace*,' *etc.* *Henry V.*, Act III. Sc. 1.

72. '*Gods of his idolatry*.' Cf. *Romeo and Juliet*, Act II. Sc. 2.

73. '*Will not have*,' *etc.* Cf. *Coriolanus*, Act II. Sc. 2.
'*Vix ea nostra voco*.' Ovid, *Metam.* XIII. 141.

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75. '*Scholar's melancholy.*' *As You Like It*, Act IV. Sc. 1.
'*He held*,' *etc.* Cf. Gray's *Elegy*, Stanza III., which Hazlitt seems to have had in mind.
'*From humble porter* [port],' *etc.* Townley, *High Life Below Stairs*, II. 1.
76. '*Modest as morning*,' *etc.* *Troilus and Cressida*, Act I. Sc. 3.
'*Deprived of its natural patrons*,' *etc.* Cf. Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (*Select Works*, ed. Payne, II. 93).

## THE MAIN-CHANCE

Published in *Literary Remains* with omissions and a few additions. The additions are printed in the text within square brackets. In other respects the Essay is printed *verbatim* from the Magazine.

78. '*Search then*,' *etc.* Pope, *Moral Essays*, III. 174-179.
82. '*Sown*,' *etc.* Cf. Middleton, *The Witch*, Act I. Sc. 2.
83. *Mr. F.* Beckford sold Fonthill to John Farquhar in 1822.
86. Note. '*Men act from calculation*,' *etc.* Cf. *Principles of Morals and Legislation*, Ch. XIV. Sec. XXVIII.
Note. '*A Mad World*,' *etc.* John Taylor, *Wandering to see the Wonders of the West* (1649).
88. '*Now all ye ladies*,' *etc.* These lines by Scott form the motto of chap. XII. of *The Betrothed*, where they are entitled 'Family Quarrels.'
Note. '*Have I not seen*,' *etc.* *The Betrothed*, chap. XII.
Note. '*I would take*,' *etc.* *Hamlet*, Act III. Sc. II.
Note. *Dr. Jamieson.* John Jamieson (1759-1838), whose *Etymological Dictionary of the Scottish Language* appeared in 1808.
90. '*Some trick*,' *etc.* *Coriolanus*, Act IV. Sc. 4.
91. *Mr. Bartholine Saddletree.* In *The Heart of Midlothian.*
*Peter Peebles.* In *Redgauntlet.*
*The Baron of Bradwardine*, *etc.* In *Waverley.*
'*The age of chivalry*,' *etc.* Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (*Select Works*, ed. Payne, II. 89).
'*Smack of honour.*' *Macbeth*, Act I. Sc. 2.
93. '*An ounce*,' *etc.* Cf. *The Faerie Queene*, I. iii. 30.
95. '*Masterless passion*,' *etc.* Cf. *The Merchant of Venice*, Act IV. Sc. 1.

## SELF-LOVE AND BENEVOLENCE

These two papers were republished in *Sketches and Essays* (1839), but were omitted in the second edition (1852). Mr. W. C. Hazlitt restored them in his edition in Bohn's Standard Library, where he states that they were written in Italy in 1825, and represent a conversation between the author, Landor and Captain Medwin.

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96. '*Sound significant.*' Hazlitt was perhaps thinking of Milton's words, 'the sound symphonious.' *Paradise Lost*, VII. 558.
'*These needs*,' *etc.* *Hamlet*, Act I. Sc. 5.
99. '*Nihil humani*,' *etc.* Terence, *Heauton-Timoroumenos*, I. 1.
'*Greater love*,' *etc.* Cf. *St. John* XV. 13.
102. '*Letting I should not*,' *etc.* Cf. *Macbeth*, Act I. Sc. 7.
104. '*Throw honour*,' *etc.* Cf. *Ibid.* Act V. Sc. 3.

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104. *Very's.* A well-known restaurant in Paris. Cf. Moore's *The Fudge Family in Paris*, Letter III.

*The Count de Stutt-Tracy.* See Vol. VII. (*The Plain Speaker*), p. 323 and note.

105. '*This one entire*,' *etc.* *Othello*, Act V. Sc. 2.

'*Precious jewel*,' *etc.* Cf. *Ibid.* Act III. Sc. 3.

'*Plain truth*,' *etc.* Cf. Pope, *Imitations of Horace, Epistles*, I. 6, l. 3.

*C. D.* See *post*, note to p. 119.

'*I shall be ever*,' *etc.* Cf. Garrick's verses in reply to Dr. John Hill. They are quoted in Doran's *Annals of the English Stage*, II. 326.

106. '*No more of that*,' *etc.* 1 *Henry IV.*, Act II. Sc. 4.

108. '*Come, but no farther.*' *Job* xxxviii. 11.

112. '*Come, let me clutch thee.*' *Macbeth*, Act II. Sc. 1.

113. '*And coming events*,' *etc.* Campbell, *Lochiel's Warning.*

115. '*Made and moulded of things past.*' *Troilus and Cressida*, Act III. Sc. 3.

'*Thou art to continue*,' *etc.* *Measure for Measure*, Act II. Sc. 1.

'*Here and hereafter*,' *etc.* Byron, *Sardanapalus*, Act IV. Sc. 1.

116. '*I do not think*,' *etc.* See vol. VII. (*Essay on the Principles of Human Action*), pp. 430-3.

119. *J. D.* Mr. W. C. Hazlitt, in his edition of *Sketches and Essays*, states that on a folio leaf in his possession, the initials are J. L. and C. L., and that Lamb and his brother are evidently the persons intended. If that be so, A. and C. can hardly be Landor and Medwin. Possibly A. represents Ayrton and Captain C. Captain Burney, but all the initials are merely matter for conjecture, and it is extremely unlikely that the dialogue ever took place in anything like its present form.

'*This is the strangest tale*,' *etc.* 1 *Henry IV.*, Act V. Sc. 4.

## THE FREE ADMISSION

Now republished for the first time. See Mr. W. C. Hazlitt's *Memoirs*, etc., I. xxx.

120. '*Loop-holes of retreat.*' Cowper, *The Task*, IV. 88.

121. '*He is all ear and eye*,' *etc.* Cf. *Comus*, 560-2.

'*The fly*,' *etc.* *The Beggar's Opera*, Act II. Sc. 2.

'*Oh! leave me*,' *etc.* Cf. Gray, *The Vegtam's Kivitha.*

*My beloved corner.* See Mr. W. C. Hazlitt's *Memoirs, etc.*, I. 205.

'*The arm-chair at an inn.*' 'A tavern chair is the throne of human felicity.' Johnson (Boswell's *Life*, ed. G. B. Hill, II. 452, note 1).

'*Witching time of night.*' *Hamlet*, Act III. Sc. 2.

'*Like bees in spring-time*,' *etc.* *Paradise Lost*, I. 768-9.

122. '*A discipline of humanity.*' Bacon (*Essays*, 'Of Marriage and Single Life') applies the phrase to wife and children. Hazlitt himself applies it to books (vol. I. *The Round Table*, p. 123).

'*Retire, the world shut out*,' *etc.* Young, *Night Thoughts*, IX.

'*Still, small voice.*' 1 *Kings* xix. 12.

*Miss Ford.* Hazlitt refers to Miss Forde as Cherry in *The Beaux-Stratagem* (revived Covent Garden, Dec. 31, 1828). In *Lectures on the Comic Writers* (VIII. 88) he refers to the dialogue in Act III. Sc. 2 as a 'love catechism.'

*Mrs. Humby.* Mrs. Humby (fl. 1817-1849) played Luise in Planché's *The Green-eyed Monster* at the Haymarket, Aug. 18, 1828. Wilkinson played Krout.

*Mrs. Goodall's Rosalind.* Charlotte Goodall, after acting at Bath, made her

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first appearance in London (Drury Lane, Oct. 2, 1788) as Rosalind. Nothing is known of her after 1813, when she was divorced.

122. '*Blow, blow,*' *etc.* *As You Like It*, Act II. Sc. 7.
'*Strut and fret,*' *etc.* *Macbeth*, Act V. Sc. 5.

123. '*See o'er the stage,*' *etc.* Cf. Thomson, *The Seasons*, Winter, 646-8.
'*Takes his ease.*' Cf. 1 *Henry IV.*, Act III. Sc. 3.

124. '*All that mighty heart,*' *etc.* Cf. Wordsworth's Sonnet, *Earth has not anything to shew more fair*, etc.
'*Thy freedom,*' *etc.* Cf. 'Thy beauty hath made me effeminate.' *Romeo and Juliet*, Act III. Sc. 1.
'*Teddy the Tiler.*' A farce by G. H. B. Rodwell (1800-1852), produced at Covent Garden, Feb. 8, 1830.
'*Robert the Devil.*' A 'Musical Romance' by Raymond, produced at Covent Garden, Feb. 2, 1830.
'*What avails,*' *etc.* The Rev. Sneyd Davies, *To the Honourable and Reverend F. C.* (Dodsley, *A Collection of Poems*, VI. 138).
'*The frozen winter,*' *etc.* Hazlitt is quoting loosely from *Paradise Lost*, IV. 267-8.
*Cowley's Gallery.* The reference is to Cowley's *The Chronicle.*

## THE SICK CHAMBER

First republished in the volume of Selections edited by Mr. Ireland, who states, apparently upon the evidence of dates and the nature of the subject, that this was the last essay which Hazlitt wrote. This cannot be certainly known, and it seems more likely that the essay on 'Personal Politics' (*post*, pp. 456-61) was written later. The essay on 'Footmen' appeared in a later number of the *New Monthly*. Hazlitt died on Sept. 18, 1830.

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125. '*The body of this death.*' *Romans* vii. 24.
'*Cooped and cabined in.*' Cf. *Macbeth*, Act III. Sc. 4.
'*Peep through the blanket,*' *etc.* *Macbeth*, Act I. Sc. 5.
'*A consummation,*' *etc.* *Hamlet*, Act III. Sc. 1.

126. *Hoc erat in votis.* Horace, *Satires*, II. vi. 1.
'*Our very gorge,*' *etc.* Cf. *Hamlet*, Act V. Sc. 1.
'*Hermit poor,*' *etc.* These lines are quoted in Lamb's *John Woodvil*, Act V.
'*Vows made in pain,*' *etc.* *Paradise Lost*, IV. 97.
'*The Devil,*' *etc.* This old proverb is quoted by Rabelais, Liv. IV. Chap. 24.

127. '*Like life and death,*' *etc.* Cf. Lamb, *John Woodvil*, Act II.
'*Trouble deaf Heaven,*' *etc.* Cf. Shakespeare's Sonnets, No. XXIX.
'*Moralise our complaints,*' *etc.* Cf. *As You Like It*, Act II. Sc. 1.
'*They have drugged,*' *etc.* Cf. *Macbeth*, Act II. Sc. 2.
'*Puzzling o'er the doubt.*' Cf. Cowper, *The Needless Alarm*, 77-78.

128. '*Like Samson,*' *etc.* Cowper, *The Task*, V. 737.
'*The worst of every evil,*' *etc.* Cf. *Temistocle*, Act III. Sc. 2.

129. '*A world,*' *etc.* Cf. Wordsworth, *Personal Talk*, l. 34.
'*A foregone conclusion.*' *Othello*, Act III. Sc. 3.

130. '*We see the children,*' *etc.* Cf. Wordsworth, Ode, *Intimations of Immortality*, 170-1.
*Paul Clifford.* Bulwer's *Paul Clifford* appeared in 1830.
'*Lively,*' *etc.* *Coriolanus*, Act IV. Sc. 5.
'*The true pathos,*' *etc.* Burns, *Epistle to Dr. Blacklock.*

## FOOTMEN

Republished in *Sketches and Essays*.

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131. *Sewell and Cross's.* Linen-drapers and silk-mercers, 44 and 45 Old Compton Street, Soho.
*The Bazaar.* Established in 1815.
'*The Corinthian capitals*,' *etc.* Cf. Burke's *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (*Select Works*, ed. Payne, II. 164).

132. *As I look down Curzon Street.* The essay would seem to have been written at 40 Half-Moon Street, where Hazlitt lodged from 1827 to 1829.

133. '*Brothers of the groves.*' Cf. vol. VIII. note to p. 467.
*Mr. N——.* *Sketches and Essays* prints 'Northcote.'
'*High Life Below Stairs.*' By James Townley (1714-1788), produced in 1759.
*Mr. C——.* ? Coleridge.
*Cassock.* *Sketches and Essays* prints *hassock*.
*The fate of the footman, etc.* See Lady Mary Wortley Montagu's *Epistle from Arthur Grey, the Footman, to Mrs. Murray.*

134. '*Vine-covered hills*,' *etc.* From lines 'Written in 1788' by William Roscoe and parodied in *The Anti-Jacobin.*
'*As pigeons pick up peas.*' Cf. *Love's Labour's Lost*, v. 2.

135. '*No more—where ignorance*,' *etc.* Gray, *On a Distant Prospect of Eton College.*
*M. de Bausset.* Louis François Joseph, Baron de Bausset (b. 1770), author of *Mémoires anecdotiques sur l'intérieur du palais* (1827-8).

136. *Wear green spectacles.* These three words, which seem to have a personal application, were omitted in *Sketches and Essays.* Cf. *post*, p. 217.

## ON THE WANT OF MONEY

Republished in *Literary Remains.*

137. '*The heaviest stone*,' *etc.* Sir T. Browne, *Hydriotaphia*, chap. IV.

138. '*That Mr. Moore*,' *etc.* Moore's Life of Sheridan appeared in 1825. This sentence was omitted in *Literary Remains.*

139. Note. '*Such gain*,' *etc.* *Cymbeline*, Act III. Sc. 3.

140. '*Screw one's courage*,' *etc.* Cf. *Macbeth*, Act I. Sc. 7.
'*As kind*,' *etc.* Dryden, *The Hind and the Panther*, I. 271.

141. '*Of formal cut.*' *As You Like It*, Act II. Sc. 7.
*The fair Aurora.* *Gil Blas*, Livre IV.
*Monsieur de Very.* See *ante*, note to p. 104.
*Apicius.* Marcus Gabius Apicius, the notorious Roman epicure, referred to by Pliny, X. 48, 68, § 133.
*Amelia's hashed mutton.* *Amelia*, Book X. chap. V.

142. '*And ever*,' *etc.* *L'Allegro*, 135-6.
'*We called*,' *etc.* Cf. *Colonel Jack*, chap. I.
'*The Colonel*,' *etc.* *Ibid.*
*The City Madam.* See Massinger's, *The City Madam*, III. 3.
'*Spanish Rogue.*' Hazlitt refers to Mateo Aleman's *Guzman de Alfarache* (1599). Cf. vol. VIII. (*Lectures on the Comic Writers*), p. 111.

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142. *Mr. Lamb has referred, etc.* See Lamb's *Specimens*, note to Rowley's *A New Wonder* (*Works*, ed. E. V. Lucas, IV. 126).
Note. '*His daughter and his ducats.*' *The Merchant of Venice*, Act II. Sc. 8.
143. '*By their so potent art.*' Cf. *The Tempest*, Act V. Sc. 1.
144. '*We know,*' *etc.* *Hamlet*, Act IV. Sc. 5.
'*Within that lowest deep,*' *etc.* Cf. *Paradise Lost*, IV. 76-77.
146. *I never knew but one man, etc.* ? Jeffrey.
'*With wine,*' *etc.* Cf. Milton's Sonnet, *Lawrence, of virtuous father*, etc.
149. '*Pure in the last recesses of the mind.*' Dryden, *The Second Satire of Persius*, 133.
*Mr. Thomas Wedgewood.* Thomas Wedgwood (1771-1805), Coleridge's friend.
'*We can hold,*' *etc.* *Richard II.*, Act I. Sc. 3.

## ON THE FEELING OF IMMORTALITY IN YOUTH

Republished with many omissions and variations in *Literary Remains* and *Winterslow*.

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150. '*Life is a pure flame,*' *etc.* Sir T. Browne, *Hydriotaphia*, chap. V.
*My brother's.* John Hazlitt (1767-1837), the miniature-painter. See Mr. W. C. Hazlitt's *Four Generations of a Literary Family*, I. 210-18.
151. '*The vast,*' *etc.* Cf. 'The wide, the unbounded prospect, lies before me.' Addison, *Cato*, Act V. Sc. 1.
'*Bear a charmed life.*' *Macbeth*, Act V. Sc. 8.
'*Bidding,*' *etc.* Collins's Ode, *The Passions*, 32.
'*This sensible,*' *etc.* *Measure for Measure*, Act III. Sc. 1.
152. '*Wine of life,*' *etc.* Cf. *Macbeth*, Act II. Sc. 3.
'*As in a glass darkly.*' Cf. 1 *Corinthians* xiii. 12.
'*So am not I.*' Sterne, *Tristram Shandy*, vol. V. chap. vii.
Note. *The Art of War* (1795) by Joseph Fawcett (d. 1804), an early friend of Hazlitt's. See vol. VI. (*Table-Talk*), 224-5 and Mr. W. C. Hazlitt's *Memoirs, etc.*, I. 75-79.
153. '*The feast of reason,*' *etc.* Pope, *Imitations of Horace*, Sat. I. 128.
'*Brave sublunary things.*' Cf. 'Those brave translunary things.' Michael Drayton, *To Henry Reynolds*.
'*The stock-dove,*' *etc.* Cf. Thomson, *The Castle of Indolence*, I. St. 4.
Note. '*Had it not been,*' *etc.* *Works*, II. 254.
Note. *She says of Richardson.* See *Works*, II. 285 *et seq.* and 222.
Note. *Monstrum ingens biforme.* Cf. *Æneid*, III. 658.
Note. '*His spirits,*' *etc.* *Works*, II. 283.
156. '*The purple light of love.*' Gray, *The Progress of Poesy*, 41.
'*The Raphael grace,*' *etc.* Cf. 'Match Raphael's grace with thy loved Guido's air.' Pope, *Moral Essays*, VIII. 36.
'*Gain new vigour,*' *etc.* Cowper, *Charity*, 104.
157. '*Beguile,*' *etc.* Cf. 'Lose and neglect the creeping hours of time.' *As You Like It*, Act II. Sc. 7.
158. '*Robbers.*' Schiller's play, produced in 1782.
'*From the Dungeon,*' *etc.* Coleridge, Sonnet, 'To the Author of *The Robbers*.'
*Don Carlos.* Schiller's play (1787).

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158. '*That time is past*,' *etc.* Cf. Wordsworth, *Lines composed a few miles above Tintern Abbey*, 83-85.

159. '*Even from the tomb*,' *etc.* Gray's *Elegy*, 91-92.

'*All the life*,' *etc.* Cf. 'For a' the life of life is dead.' Burns, *Lament for James, Earl of Glencairn*, st. 6.

'*From the last dregs*,' *etc.* Cf. Dryden, *Aurengzebe*, Act IV. Sc. 1.

160. '*Treason domestic*,' *etc.* Cf. *Macbeth*, Act III. Sc. 2.

'*Reverbs its own hollowness*.' Cf. *King Lear*, Act I. Sc. 1.

## ON READING NEW BOOKS

Published with omissions in *Sketches and Essays*. The essay was written at Florence. See Mr. W. C. Hazlitt's *Memoirs*, *etc.* II. 154.

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161. Note. See vol. VIII. (*Lectures on the Comic Writers*), p. 22 and note.

162. '*Has just come*,' *etc.* Cf. *Richard III.*, Act I. Sc. 1.

164. *A Manuscript of Cicero's.* Hazlitt probably refers to Cardinal Angelo Mai's (1782-1854) discoveries.

*A Noble Lord.* The Marquis of Blandford, who bought Valdarfer's edition of Boccaccio for £2260 at the Roxburgh sale in 1812. Cf. *ante*, p. 43.

*Mr. Thomas Taylor.* Thomas Taylor (1758-1835), the Platonist. The 'old Duke of Norfolk' (Bernard Edward, 12th Duke, 1765-1842) was his patron, and locked up nearly the whole of Taylor's edition of *Plato* (5 vols., 1804) in his library.

*Ireland's celebrated forgery.* The main forgery, *Vortigern*, by William Henry Ireland, was produced at Drury Lane on April 2, 1796.

Note. *Mr. G. D.'s chambers.* Lamb's friend George Dyer (1755-1841) lived in Clifford's Inn from 1792. His *History of the University and Colleges of Cambridge*, *etc.* was published in 2 vols. in 1814. In reference to the number of corrections in this work, Lamb spoke of Dyer as 'Cancellarius Magnus.'

Note. *Another friend of mine*, *etc.* Leigh Hunt. See his essay 'Jack Abbot's Breakfast' reprinted in *Men, Women, and Books* (1847).

166. '*Proud as when*,' *etc.* Cf. *Troilus and Cressida*, Act I. Sc. 3.

167. '*Like sunken wreck*,' *etc.* Cf. *Henry V.*, Act I. Sc. 2.

168. '*Full of wise saws*,' *etc.* Cf. *As You Like It*, Act II. Sc. 7.

'*An insolent piece of paper*.' 'A piece of arrogant paper.' Massinger, *A New Way to pay Old Debts*, Act IV. Sc. 3.

'*Somewhat musty*.' Cf. 'Something musty.' *Hamlet*, Act III. Sc. 2.

*Longinus complains*, *etc.* See Longinus, *On the Sublime*, IX.

169. *Irving's orations.* Cf. vol. IV. (*The Spirit of the Age*), p. 228.

*The Jew's letters.* Dr. Philip le Fanu published in 1777 a translation of the Abbé Guenée's *Lettres de certaines Juives à M. Voltaire.*

*That Van Diemen's Land of letters.* These words were omitted in *Sketches and Essays.*

*Flocci-nauci*, *etc.* Shenstone, Letter xxi. 1741 (*Works*, 1791, III. 49).

'*Flames in the forehead*,' *etc.* *Lycidas*, 171.

170. *Mr. Godwin composed an Essay*, *etc.* Hazlitt perhaps refers to the letter added by 'Edward Baldwin' to his own English Grammar. See vol. VI. p. 388.

Note. *A certain poet.* This note was omitted in *Sketches and Essays.*

171. '*By Heavens*,' *etc.* Wordsworth Sonnet, *The world is too much with us.*

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171. '*Trampled*,' *etc.* Cf. Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (*Select Works*, ed. Payne, II. 93).
'*Kept like an apple*,' *etc.* Cf. *Hamlet*, Act IV. Sc. 2.
172. Note. '*Speak evil of dignities.*' 2 *Peter* ii. 10.
Note. *The Queen's matrimonial-ladder.* One of William Hone's squibs, published in 1820, and illustrated with fourteen cuts by Cruikshank.

## ON DISAGREEABLE PEOPLE

Republished in *Sketches and Essays.*

174. '*Discourse of reason*,' *etc.* Loosely quoted from *Hamlet*. Cf. Act I. Sc. 2 and Act IV. Sc. 4.
'*The whole*,' *etc.* Cf. *S. Matthew* ix. 12.
'*As when*,' *etc.* Thomson, *The Castle of Indolence*, St. 64.
177. '*Yea, into our heart of hearts.*' Cf. *Hamlet*, Act III. Sc. 2.
'*The volumes*,' *etc.* Roscommon, *Horace's Art of Poetry.*
'*That dallies*,' *etc.* Cf. *Twelfth Night*, Act II. Sc. 4.
178. '*Wit at the helm*,' *etc.* Cf. 'Youth on the prow, and Pleasure at the helm.' Gray, *The Bard*, 74.
179. *A butt, according to the Spectator, etc.* See *The Spectator*, No. 47.
181. '*Hew you*,' *etc.* Cf. *Julius Cæsar*, Act II. Sc. 1.
*Tempora, etc.* Cf. *Æneid*, IV. 293-4.
'*Not to admire*,' *etc.* Pope, *Imitations of Horace*, Epistles I. vi. 1-2.
*The Westminster School of Reform.* Hazlitt refers to the writers, including Bentham and James Mill, associated with *The Westminster Review*, founded in 1824.
182. '*Milk of human kindness.*' *Macbeth*, Act I. Sc. 5.

## ON MEANS AND ENDS

Published in *Literary Remains* with many variations presumably introduced by the editor, and again in the same form in *Winterslow.*

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184. '*We work by wit*,' *etc.* *Othello*, Act II. Sc. 3.
185. '*Leaps at once*,' *etc.* Cowper, *The Task*, v. 686.
'*From Indus*,' *etc.* Pope, *Eloisa to Abelard*, 58.
187. *Hinc illae lachrymae.* Horace, *Epistles*, I. xix. 41.
188. '*Constrained by mastery.*' Chaucer, *Canterbury Tales*, The Franklin's Tale, 36; Wordsworth quotes the line in *The Excursion*, VI. 162-5.
189. '*Makes a sunshine*,' *etc.* *The Faerie Queene*, I. iii. 4.
190. *David's and Girodet's pictures.* Jacques Louis David (1748-1825) and Anne Louis Girodet (1767-1824).
'*Potations, pottle deep.*' *Othello*, Act II. Sc. 3.
192. '*In a phantasma*,' *etc.* *Julius Cæsar*, Act II. Sc. 1.
'*Courage*,' *etc.* *Paradise Lost*, I. 108.
193. '*His thoughts*,' *etc.* Cf. *Ibid.*, IX. 467.
Note. *Strong passion, etc.* Cf. *The Rambler*, No. 1.
Note. '*The lunatic*,' *etc.* *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Act V. Sc. 1.
194. '*Set but a Scotsman*,' *etc.* Cf. Burns, *The Author's Earnest Cry and Prayer*, Postscript, St. 4.
'*And it alone*,' *etc.* Cf. *Twelfth Night*, Act I. Sc. 1.
'*We read his works.*' Lamb's Essay 'On the Genius and Character of Hogarth' (*Works*, ed. E. V. Lucas, I. 71).

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195. '*The darlings of his precious eye.*' Cf. 'Make it a darling like your precious eye.' *Othello*, Act III. Sc. 4.
196. '*The jovial thigh*,' *etc.* Cf. *Cymbeline*, Act IV. Sc. 2.
197. '*They are careful*,' *etc.* Cf. *S. Luke* x. 41-42.
198. '*And with their darkness*,' *etc.* Cf. *Paradise Lost*, I. 391.
'*They also serve*,' *etc.* Adapted from Milton's Sonnet, No. xx., 'When I consider how my light is spent,' etc.

## ON PERSONAL IDENTITY

Published with some omissions in *Winterslow*.

'*Ha! here be*,' *etc.* *King Lear*, Act III. Sc. 4.
'*If I were not Alexander*,' *etc.* The saying is given by Plutarch.
Note. *Zoffani.* Johann Zoffany, or Zaufelly (1733-1810).
Note. *Reynolds's Speculation.* A comedy by Frederick Reynolds, produced in 1795. George III. was much amused by it. See *Life of Reynolds*, II. 208-210.
199. '*Wishing to be*,' *etc.* Cf. Shakespeare, Sonnet XXIX.
'*The rub*,' *etc.* Cf. *Hamlet*, Act III. Sc. 1.
'*Put off*,' *etc.* *Ibid.*
200. '*What more felicity*,' *etc.* Spenser, *Muiopotmos*, St. 27.
201. '*That something*,' *etc.* Cf. Pope, *An Essay on Man*, IV. 3-4.
'*Very choice Italian.*' *Hamlet*, Act III. Sc. 2.
'*Vows*,' *etc.* Cf. *Paradise Lost*, IV. 97.
'*The native hue*,' *etc.* Cf. *Hamlet*, Act III. Sc. 1.
202. '*Shut up*,' *etc.* *Macbeth*, Act II. Sc. 1.
'*I 'd sooner*,' *etc.* Cf. *Julius Cæsar*, Act IV. Sc. 3.
*Sir Thomas Lethbridge.* A sturdy Tory, member for Somersetshire. He is possibly the L—— referred to in vol. VI. (*Table-Talk*), p. 94. Though a staunch Protectionist, he voted for Reform and Catholic Emancipation.
203. '*Ethereal braid*,' *etc.* See vol. IV. (*The Spirit of the Age*), note to p. 216.
*Had I been a lord I should have married, etc.* This sentence and the next were omitted in *Winterslow*.
204. '*Give me*,' *etc.* Cf. 3 *Henry VI.*, Act I. Sc. 4.
'*Monarchise*,' *etc.* *Richard II.*, Act III. Sc. 2.
'*Tenth transmitters*,' *etc.* Richard Savage, *The Bastard.*
'*In the catalogue*,' *etc.* Cf. *Macbeth*, Act III. Sc. 1.
'*Swinish multitude.*' Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (*Select Works*, ed. Payne, II. 93).
205. '*The fair*,' *etc.* Cf. *As You Like It*, Act III. Sc. 2.
*The person who bought Punch.* Cf. *post*, p. 353.
206. *Why will Mr. Cobbett, etc.* Cobbett had recently (1826) unsuccessfully contested Preston.
*The bird described by Chaucer.* See Chaucer, *The Canterbury Tales*, The Manciple's Tale, 59 *et seq.*, and The Squiere's Tale, 603 *et seq.*
*You say there is a common language, etc.* These words, down to 'And he will laugh in your face,' were omitted in *Winterslow*.
207. '*A certain tender bloom*,' *etc.* Cf. 'A certain tender gloom o'erspread his face.' Thomson, *The Castle of Indolence*, I. St. 57.
208. '*Stuff o' the conscience.* *Othello*, Act I. Sc. 2.
'*Laggard age.*' Collins, Ode, *The Passions*, 112.
209. *Like Benvenuto Cellini, etc.* See *Life of Benvenuto Cellini*, Part II. lxxviii.

# NOTES

## APHORISMS ON MAN

Now republished for the first time. In *The Monthly Magazine* they appeared as follows : I.-XI. October 1830 ; XII.-XXXVI. November 1830 ; XXXVII.-XLVII. December 1830 ; XLVIII.-LV. April 1831 ; LVI.-LXVI. May 1831 ; LXVII.-LXX. June 1831. They are described as 'by the late William Hazlitt.'

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210. *Monmouth-street.* In St. Giles's, now partly occupied by Shaftesbury Avenue. Allusions to its old-clothes shops are very frequent in eighteenth-century literature.

211. '*In the deep bosom,*' *etc.* *Richard III.*, Act I. Sc. 1.
'*At one fell swoop.*' *Macbeth*, Act IV. Sc. 3.

214. *O'Connell.* Hazlitt no doubt refers to the proceedings of O'Connell after his election for Co. Clare in 1828.

215. '*The soft collar,*' *etc.* Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (*Select Works*, ed. Payne, II. 90).
'*The iron rod,*' *etc.* Cf.

> 'When the scourge inexorably, and the torturing hour,
> Calls us to penance.' *Paradise Lost*, II. 90-2.

217. *An editor.* Cf. *ante*, p. 136.

218. '*There goes my wicked self.*' Hazlitt was perhaps thinking of the saying attributed to John Bradford (1510 ?-1555), who, on seeing some criminals going to execution, is said to have exclaimed : 'But for the grace of God, there goes John Bradford.'
'*To be honest,*' *etc.* *Hamlet*, Act II. Sc. 2.
*L——.* ? Lamb.

219. '*Leave others poor indeed.*' Cf. *Othello*, Act III. Sc. 3.
'*To be direct,*' *etc.* *Othello*, Act III. Sc. 3.

220. '*Tout homme,*' *etc.* Cf. vol. I. (*The Round Table*), note to p. 117.

221. *A popular author.* Scott, no doubt.
'*Writes himself,*' *etc.* Cf. *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, Act I. Sc. 1.

223. '*To triumph,*' *etc.* Gray, *The Bard*, 142.

224. *A certain bookseller.* Sir Richard Phillips. See vol. VI. (*Mr. Northcote's Conversations*), p. 418.

225. '*From every work,*' *etc.* *The Faerie Queene*, I. IV. 20.

226. '*Melted,*' *etc.* Cf. *Hamlet*, Act I. Sc. 2.
*Beau Didapper.* See *Joseph Andrews*, Book IV. chap. IX.

228. '*Damned spot.*' *Macbeth*, Act V. Sc. 1.

229. '*The web,*' *etc.* *All's Well that Ends Well*, Act IV. Sc. 3.
*The Devil's Elixir, etc.* *The Devil's Elixir, or the Shadowless Man*, a musical romance by Edward Fitzball (1792-1873), produced at Covent Garden, April 20, 1829 ; *The Bottle Imp*, a melodrama by Richard Brinsley Peake (1792-1847), produced at the Lyceum, July 7, 1828, and at Covent Garden, Oct. 17, 1828.
*Mr. Farley.* Charles Farley (1771-1859), the actor, to whose skill as a theatrical machinist at Covent Garden Hazlitt here refers.

230. '*La Belle Assemblée's dresses for May.*' Cf. 'In the manner of—Ackerman's dresses for May' (Moore, *Horace*, XI. ii.), quoted elsewhere by Hazlitt.
*M. Stultz.* M. Stulz, the well-known tailor, referred to by Bulwer in *Pelham* and (more than once) by Thackeray.

# FUGITIVE WRITINGS

## A CHAPTER ON EDITORS

Republished with some omissions in *Sketches and Essays*. In the Magazine there is the following note by the Editor :—'We give insertion to this article, one of the posthumous papers of Mr. Hazlitt, to shew that we do not consider ourselves implicated in the abuses complained of ; and that we have no right to any share of indignation so whimsically lavished upon our fraternity. Ed.'

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230. '*Our withers*,' *etc.* *Hamlet*, Act III. Sc. 2.
'*Tittle-tattle*.' The phrase is so printed in the Magazine and in *Sketches and Essays*, but Hazlitt probably wrote 'kittle cattle,' a distinctively Scots expression for what he meant to say.
'*Lay the flattering unction*,' *etc.* Cf. *Hamlet*, Act III. Sc. 4.

231. *As Mr. Horne Tooke said*, *etc.* See vol. IV. (*The Spirit of the Age*), p. 236 and note.

232. *We only know one Editor*. Hazlitt possibly refers to the Editor of *Blackwood's Magazine*.
*We will not mention names*, *etc.* This sentence was omitted in *Sketches and Essays*.
'*More subtle web*,' *etc.* *The Faerie Queene*, II. xii. 77.

233. *The conductor*, *etc.* This sentence and the next but one were omitted in *Sketches and Essays*.
'*Here's the rub*.' Cf. *Hamlet*, Act III. Sc. 1.

## THE LETTER-BELL

Reprinted with considerable omissions in *Sketches and Essays*.

235. '*One entire*,' *etc.* *Othello*, Act V. Sc. 2.
*Blue hills*. Cf. vol. VI. (*Table-Talk*), p. 256.

236. '*I should notice*,' *etc.* A long passage from this point to 'accumulate to a tolerable sum' (p. 237) was omitted from *Sketches and Essays*.
*From——to——*. *Sketches and Essays* reads 'From Wem to Shrewsbury.' Cf. *My First Acquaintance with Poets*, *post*, p. 260.
'*And by the vision splendid*,' *etc.* Cf. Wordsworth's Ode, *Intimations of Immortality*, 73-74.
'*What though the radiance*,' *etc.* *Ibid.* 179-82.
'*Like morn*,' *etc.* Cf. *Paradise Lost*, V. 310-11.
*And may he not yet greet the yellow light*, *etc.* Cf. *post*, p. 271.
'*And from his neck so free*,' *etc.* *The Ancient Mariner*, 289-91.

238. *Vangoyen*. Jan Van Goyen (1596-1666), one of whose landscapes, it would seem, Hazlitt had copied.
'*The slow canal*,' *etc.* Goldsmith, *The Traveller*, 293-4.
'*While with an eye*,' *etc.* Wordsworth, *Lines composed a few miles above Tintern Abbey*, 47-49.
'*The secrets*,' *etc.* Cf. *Hamlet*, Act I. Sc. 5.
'*Entire affection*,' *etc.* Cf. *The Faerie Queene*, I. viii. 40.
'*His shame*,' *etc.* Cf. Goldsmith, *The Deserted Village*, 412.
'*Made good digestion*,' *etc.* Cf. *Macbeth*, Act III. Sc. 4.

239. *An ingenious friend and arch-critic*. ? Jeffrey.
'*More germain* [germane],' *etc.* *Hamlet*, Act V. Sc. 2.

240. '*Hark!*' *etc.* Cowper, *The Task*, IV. 1, *et seq.*
*Lord Byron denies*, *etc.* See vol. VI. (*Table-Talk*), p. 210 and note, and vol. XI. (*Fugitive Writings*), p. 492.

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240. *The telegraphs.* A system of semaphores, presumably. Electric telegraphs belong to a later date.
*The new revolution.* The Revolution of July 1830. Cf. *post*, pp. 456, *et seq.*
*The beacon-fires.* See the *Agamemnon* of Æschylus, ll. 281-316.

## ON THE SPIRIT OF MONARCHY

Republished in *Literary Remains*. The essay was published (? 1835) as a pamphlet (together with 'The Moral Effects of Aristocracy,' by Godwin).

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242. '*And by the vision*,' *etc.* See *ante*, note to p. 236.
*The madman in Hogarth. The Rake's Progress*, Plate VIII.
'*There goes*,' *etc.* Cf. *ante*, p. 218.
*We once heard, etc.* In vol. VI. (*Mr. Northcote's Conversations*), p. 387, this sentiment is attributed to a 'Mr. R——.' It is clear from the present passage that this person was not Mr. Railton, but William Roscoe (1753-1831), the well-known historian, and that therefore the reading of *The London Weekly Review* was correct. See note to vol. VI. p. 387.
243. '*That within*,' *etc.* Cf. *Hamlet*, Act I. Sc. 2.
'*To fear*,' *etc.* *Othello*, Act I. Sc. 2.
244. '*Peep through*,' *etc.* *Macbeth*, Act I. Sc. 5.
'*Great is Diana*,' *etc.* *Acts* xix. 28.
'*Your gods*,' *etc.* Cf. *S. Matthew* xiii. 13.
*In contempt of their worshippers.* Cf. Burke's *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (*Select Works*, ed. Payne, II. 17).
Note. Dryden, *Absalom and Achitophel*, I. 100-3.
245. '*Gods partial*,' *etc.* Pope, *An Essay on Man*, III. 257-8.
'*Any mark*,' *etc.* Cf. 1 *Henry IV.* Act III. Sc. 2.
246. Note. See vol. III. (*Political Essays*), p. 298 and notes.
247. '*From the crown*,' *etc.* Cf. *Isaiah* i. 6.
*Virtue, says Montesquieu, etc.* *Esprit des Lois*, III. 6.
'*Honour dishonourable.*' *Paradise Lost*, IV. 314-15.
'*Of outward shew*,' *etc.* Cf. *Ibid.* VIII. 538-9.
248. '*To tread*,' *etc.* *Hamlet*, Act I. Sc. 3.
'*Nice customs*,' *etc.* *Henry V.* Act V. Sc. 2.
'*In form and motion*,' *etc.* Cf. *Hamlet*, Act II. Sc. 2.
'*Vice is undone*,' *etc.* Pope, *Epilogue to the Satires*, I. 142-9.
249. *A Coronation day.* The coronation of George IV. had taken place on July 19, 1821.
250. *Prince Leopold.* Prince Leopold of Saxe-Coburg (1790-1865), who had married the Princess Charlotte, and afterwards (1831) became King of the Belgians.
*Castlereagh . . . unstained, etc.* Castlereagh committed suicide on Aug. 12, 1822.
'*A present deity*,' *etc.* Dryden, *Alexander's Feast*, 35-6.
251. '*Worth makes the man*,' *etc.* Pope, *An Essay on Man*, IV. 203-4.
'*The only amaranthine flower*,' *etc.* Cowper, *The Task*, III. 268-9.
252. '*A man may read*,' *etc.* *Holy Dying*, chap. i. § 2.

## ON THE SCOTCH CHARACTER

Now republished for the first time. See Mr. W. C. Hazlitt's *Memoirs, etc.* (1867), I. xxvii.

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253. '*Edina's darling seat.*' 'Edina! Scotia's darling seat!' Burns, *Address to Edinburgh.*

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253. *Lismahago.* In *Humphry Clinker.*

254. *Lord Erskine.* Lord Erskine was entertained at a banquet in Edinburgh on Feb. 21, 1820. He had not been in Scotland for more than fifty years.

255. *Teres et* [atque] *rotundus.* Horace, *Satires*, II. vii. 86.

*A very learned man.* (?) Sir David Brewster, editor of *The Edinburgh Encyclopædia.* Cf. *post*, p. 316.

*Mr. Macvey Napier.* Macvey Napier (1776-1847), editor of a supplement to the 4th, 5th, and 6th editions and of the 7th edition of *The Encyclopædia Britannica*, and Jeffrey's successor as editor of *The Edinburgh Review.* Hazlitt had contributed to the Supplement. See vol. IX. (*Essays on the Fine Arts*), p. 377 and note. In *A Selection from the Correspondence of the late Macvey Napier, Esq.* (1879), p. 21, there is the following letter from Hazlitt to Napier :—

'Winterslow Hut, near Salisbury,
'*August* 26, 1818.

'My dear Sir,—I am sorry to be obliged, from want of health and a number of other engagements, which I am little able to perform, to decline the flattering offer you make me. I have got to write, between this and the end of October, an octavo volume or a set of lectures on the Comic Drama of this country for the Surrey Institution, which I am anxious not to slur over, and it will be as much as I can do to get it ready in time. I am also afraid that I should not be able to do the article in question, or yourself, justice, for I am not only without books, but without knowledge of what books are necessary to be consulted on the subject. To get up an article in a Review on any subject of general literature is quite as much as I can do without exposing myself. The object of an Encyclopædia is, I take it, to condense and combine all the facts relating to a subject, and all the theories of any consequence already known or advanced. Now, where the business of such a work ends, is just where I begin, that is, I might perhaps throw in an idle speculation or two of my own, not contained in former accounts of the subject, and which would have very little pretensions to rank as scientific. I know something about Congreve, but nothing at all of Aristophanes, and yet I conceive that the writer of an article on the *Drama* ought to be as well acquainted with the one as the other. If you should see Mr. Constable, will you tell him I am writing *nonsense* for him as fast as I can?—Your very humble servant, W. HAZLITT.'

It is difficult to know what 'nonsense' Hazlitt was writing for Constable.

256. '*Damnable iteration.*' 1 *Henry IV.*, Act I. Sc. 2.

*Not like La Fleur, etc.* See Sterne, *The Sentimental Journey*, The Passport, Paris.

Note 1. *Cockney School of Poetry.* See vol. VI. (*Table-Talk*), 99 and note.

Note 1. '*Kernes and Gallowglasses.*' *Macbeth*, Act I. Sc. 2.

258. '*Sins,*' *etc.* Cf. *Hebrews* xii. 1.

*A much-talked-of publication.* Hazlitt no doubt refers to *The Beacon*, which, like *John Bull*, was intended to counteract the progress of Radical doctrine during the period of the Queen's trial. For an account of it and of Scott's connection with it, see Lockhart's *Life of Scott*, v. 152-3.

'*Leaning,*' *etc.* Cf. *The Faerie Queene*, I. vi. 14.

259. *The editor.* Theodore Hook, the editor of *John Bull*, was an Englishman.

'*Entire affection,*' *etc.* Cf. *The Faerie Queene*, I. viii. 40.

# NOTES

## MY FIRST ACQUAINTANCE WITH POETS

Republished in *Literary Remains* and *Winterslow*. The germ of the essay appeared in a short letter to *The Examiner*, reprinted in *Political Essays*. See vol. III. pp. 152-3 and notes.

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259. *W——m.* Wem.
'*Dreaded name*,' *etc.* *Paradise Lost*, II. 964-5.
'*Fluttering*,' *etc.* Cf. *Coriolanus*, Act v. Sc. 6.

260. '*High-born Hoel's harp*,' *etc.* Gray, *The Bard*, 28.
'*Bound them*,' *etc.* Pope, *Ode on St. Cecilia's Day*, 90-91.
*The fires in the Agamemnon.* Cf. *ante*, p. 240 and note.
*It was in January*, *etc.* This paragraph and the next are from *The Examiner*. See the notes to vol. III. (*Political Essays*), pp. 152-3.

262. '*As are the children*,' *etc.* Cf. Thomson, *The Castle of Indolence*, II. xxxiii.
'*A certain tender bloom*,' *etc.* Cf. *ante*, p. 207 and note.
'*Somewhat fat and pursy*.' Cf. 'He 's fat and scant of breath' (*Hamlet*, Act v. Sc. 2), and 'For in the fatness of these pursy times,' etc. (*Ibid.* Act III. Sc. 4).

263. '*No figures*,' *etc.* *Julius Cæsar*, Act II. Sc. 1.

264. Note 1. For an account of the Rev. William Hazlitt, see Mr. W. C. Hazlitt's *Four Generations of a Literary Family*, The First Generation.

265. *T. Wedgwood.* A Life of Tom Wedgwood was published recently (1903) by the late Mr. R. B. Litchfield.
'*Sounding on his way*.' See vol. IV. (*The Spirit of the Age*), note to p. 214.

266. *Credat Judaeus Apella!* Horace, *Satires*, I. v. 100.
'*Thus I refute him, Sir*.' See Boswell's *Life* (ed. G. B. Hill), I. 471.

267. '*Kind and affable*,' *etc.* Cf. *Paradise Lost*, VIII. 648-50.
*He has somewhere told himself.* See *Biographia Literaria*, chap. X.
*That other Vision of Judgment.* Byron's, first published in *The Liberal*, No. 1.
*Bridge-street junto.* Cf. vol. VI. (*Table-Talk*), p. 190 and note.

268. *Tom Jones and the adventure of the muff.* See *Tom Jones*, Book X. chap. v. *et seq.*
*At Tewkesbury.* According to the essay 'On Going a Journey,' it was at Bridgwater. See vol. VI. (*Table-Talk*), p. 186.

269. *A friend of the poet's.* This is a mistake. Wordsworth paid £23 a year for Alfoxden. The agreement is given in Mrs. Henry Sandford's *Thomas Poole and his Friends*, I. 225.

270. '*In spite of pride*,' *etc.* Pope, *An Essay on Man*, I. 293.
'*While yet*,' *etc.* Cf. Thomson, *The Seasons*, Spring, 18.
'*Of Providence*,' *etc.* *Paradise Lost*, II. 559-560.

271. *Chantry's bust.* Sir Francis Chantrey's bust, now at Coleorton.
*Castle Spectre.* Originally produced (at Drury Lane) December 14, 1797.
'*His face*,' *etc.* Cf. *Macbeth*, Act I. Sc. 5.

272. *Tom Poole.* Thomas Poole (1765-1837), for an account of whom see Mrs. Sandford's *Thomas Poole and his Friends*.
'*Followed in the chase*,' *etc.* Cf. *Othello*, Act II. Sc. 3.
*Sir Walter Scott's*, *etc.* Hazlitt probably refers to the banquet given to George IV. by the Magistrates of Edinburgh, August 24, 1822.

273. *The Death of Abel.* Solomon Gessner's *Tod Abels* (1758).

274. '*Ribbed sea-sands*.' *The Ancient Mariner*, 227. This was one of the lines for which Coleridge was indebted to Wordsworth.

275. '*But there is matter*,' *etc.* Wordsworth, *Hart-leap Well*, 95-96.

## PULPIT ORATORY, ETC.

Now reprinted for the first time. See Mr. W. C. Hazlitt's *Memoirs, etc.*, I. xxvii. Cf. the essay on Edward Irving in *The Spirit of the Age* (vol. IV. pp. 222-231). After Hazlitt's essay there follows a savage attack on Irving (? by T. J. Hogg), as to which the editor says : 'The following has also lost its way to us. We take it in as a foundling, but without adopting all its sentiments.'

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'*Got the start,*' *etc.* Cf. *Julius Cæsar*, Act I. Sc. 2.

'*Kingly Kensington.*' Swift's Ballad, *Duke Upon Duke*, St. 14.

276. *Lady Bluemount.* Lady Beaumont presumably, the wife of Wordsworth's friend, Sir George Howland Beaumont.

*Mr. Botherby.* ? William Sotheby (1757-1833), whose persistent attempts as a dramatic author may explain the nickname.

*Mr. Theodore Flash.* Theodore Hook, no doubt, who afterwards denounced Irving as a humbug. See *John Bull*, July 20, 1823.

Note. *Mr. Dubois.* Edward Dubois (1774-1850), wit and journalist.

Note. '*Rose,*' *etc.* Cf. *Hamlet*, Act III. Sc. 1.

277. '*His foot mercurial,*' *etc.* *Cymbeline*, Act IV. Sc. 2.

'*The iron,*' *etc.* *The Psalter*, Psalm CV. 18.

'*Come, let me clutch thee.*' *Macbeth*, Act II. Sc. 1.

280. '*Spins,*' *etc.* Cf. *Love's Labour 's Lost*, Act V. Sc. 1.

'*Loop or peg,*' *etc.* Cf. *Othello*, Act III. Sc. 3.

281. '*Fire hot from Hell.*' Cf. *Julius Cæsar*, Act III. Sc. 1.

282. *The swimmer.* See this passage quoted by Hazlitt in vol. V. (*Lectures on the Age of Elizabeth*), pp. 323-4.

283. *Mr. Croly.* George Croly (1780-1860), a regular contributor to *Blackwood's Magazine*, had published *Paris in* 1815 (1817).

284. '*Best virtue.*' Cf. *All's Well That Ends Well*, Act IV. Sc. 3.

'*We pause for a reply.*' Cf. *Julius Cæsar*, Act III. Sc. 2.

285. *Daniel Wilson.* Daniel Wilson (1778-1858), at this time incumbent of St. John's Chapel, Bedford Row, Bloomsbury, afterwards Bishop of Calcutta.

'*Oh! for an eulogy,*' *etc.* Cf. 'Oh, for a curse to kill with.' Otway, *Venice Preserved*, Act II. Sc. 2.

## ARGUING IN A CIRCLE

Now reprinted for the first time. See Mr. W. C. Hazlitt's *Memoirs, etc.*, I. xxvii.

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285. '*Fancies and good nights.*' Cf. 2 *Henry IV.*, Act III. Sc. 2.

'*Base cullionly fellow.*' Cf. 2 *Henry VI.*, Act I. Sc. 3.

'*Beggarly, unmannered corse.*' Cf. 1 *Henry IV.* Act I. Sc. 3.

'*The age of chivalry,*' *etc.* Cf. Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (*Select Works*, ed. Payne, II. 89).

'*The melancholy Jacques,*' *etc.* *As You Like It*, Act II. Sc. 1.

286. *The present Duke of Buckingham.* Richard Temple Nugent Brydges Chandos, created Duke of Buckingham and Chandos, Feb. 1822.

'*New manners,*' *etc.* Thomas Warton, Sonnet, *Written in a Blank Leaf of Dugdale's Monasticon.*

'*Submits,*' *etc.* Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (*Select Works*, ed. Payne, II. 90).

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287. '*Long insulted*,' *etc.* Quoted elsewhere. See vol. III. (*Political Essays*), pp. 13 and 100.
'*With jealous leer malign*.' *Paradise Lost*, IV. 503.
288. '*Cause was hearted*.' Cf. *Othello*, Act I. Sc. 3.
'*The open*,' *etc.* Cf. *Paradise Lost*, X. 112-113.
'*The shame*,' *etc.* Cf. 2 *Samuel* i. 16.
289. *The Editor of the New Times*. Dr. Stoddart.
'*Make the worse*,' *etc.* *Paradise Lost*, II. 114.
'*So musical*,' *etc.* *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, IV. 1.
290. '*So well*,' *etc.* Cf. *Paradise Lost*, IX. 549.
*Mr. Canning's present . . . situation*. Canning had become Foreign Secretary in 1822, and had shortly afterwards acknowledged the independence of the Spanish American Colonies.
291. '*Turn-spit of the king's kitchen*.' See Burke's 'Speech on Economical Reform,' (*Works*, Bohn, II. 85-86), and cf. vol. I. (*The Round Table*), p. 427.
'*Undoing all*,' *etc.* 2 *Henry VI.*, Act I. Sc. 1.
'*Though that their joy*,' *etc.* Cf. *Othello*, Act I. Sc. 1.
292. '*Like an exhalation*,' *etc.* Cf. *Comus*, 556.
'*Ride in the whirlwind*,' *etc.* Addison, *The Campaign*, and Pope, *The Dunciad*, III. 264.
293. *Noctes*, *etc.* Horace, *Satires*, II. vi. 65.
'*The beautiful*,' *etc.* Coleridge, *The Death of Wallenstein*, Act V. Sc. 1.
294. '*A thick scurf*.' See *ante*, note to p. 82.
'*Sweet smelling gums*.' *Paradise Lost*, XI. 327.
'*Dews of Castalie*.' Cf. Spenser, *The Ruines of Time*, 431.
295. *The Six Acts*. Passed by Lord Sidmouth in 1819 after the Manchester reform meeting.

## QUERIES AND ANSWERS; OR THE RULE OF CONTRARY

Now republished for the first time. See Mr. W. C. Hazlitt's *Memoirs*, *etc.* (1867), I. xxix.

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297. *Thimble*. Cf. a passage, *ante*, at the foot of p. 39. The editors have not been able to identify the person here referred to as 'Thimble.'

## ON KNOWLEDGE OF THE WORLD

This paper and the two following ones were republished in *Sketches and Essays*.

'*Who shall go about*,' *etc.* Cf. *The Merchant of Venice*, Act II. Sc. 9.
298. '*Subtle*,' *etc.* Cf. *Cymbeline*, Act III. Sc. 3.
'*The children*,' *etc.* Cf. *S. Luke* xvi. 8.
299. '*To see ourselves*,' *etc.* Burns, *To a Louse*, St. 8.
'*No figures*,' *etc.* Cf. *Julius Cæsar*, Act II. Sc. 1.
'*His soul*,' *etc.* Pope, *An Essay on Man*, I. 101-2.
300. '*What shall it profit*,' *etc.* *S. Mark* viii. 36.
301. *Non ex quovis*, *etc.* Erasmus, *Adagiorum Chiliades*, 'Munus aptum.'
'*No mark*,' *etc.* 1 *Henry IV.*, Act III. Sc. 2.
'*The soul*,' *etc.* Cf. *Othello*, Act I. Sc. 3.

## THE SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED

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301. *Bub Doddington said, etc.* Cf. vol. VI. (*Table-Talk*), p. 100 and note.
*Salus populi, etc.* The Twelve Tables, *De Officio Consulis.*
*The upstart, etc.* This sentence was omitted in *Sketches and Essays.*

302. *Mr. Cobbett seemed disappointed, etc.* The reference is probably to *The Weekly Political Register* for Oct. 29, 1825, where Cobbett deplores the fact that Baron Maseres (1731-1824), who had visited him in prison, had left the bulk of his large property to a 'little *Protestant parson.*'
'*His patron's ghost,*' *etc.* Cf. Thomson, *The Castle of Indolence*, I. St. 51.

303. '*Never standing upright,*' *etc.* See Macklin's *The Man of the World*, II. 1.
'*In large heart enclosed.*' Cf. *Paradise Lost*, VII. 486.

304. '*The world,*' *etc.* Thomson, *The Seasons*, Autumn, 233.
'*The heart of man,*' *etc.* Cf. *Jeremiah* xvii. 9.
'*As the flesh,*' *etc.* Cf. *Measure for Measure*, Act II. Sc. 1.
'*Tread,*' *etc.* Cf. *Hamlet*, Act I. Sc. 3.

305. '*If thine eye,*' *etc.* Cf. *S. Matthew* v. 29.
'*The little chapel-bell,*' *etc.* Hazlitt refers to *The Chapel Bell*, an early poem of Southey's (1793), and *The Book of the Church*, published by Southey in 1824.
*Camille-Desmoulins, etc.* Camille Desmoulins (1760-1794), the well-known Revolutionary pamphleteer; Camille Jordan (1771-1821), called 'Jordan Carillon,' from a speech (July 4, 1797) in which he proposed to restore the use of bells to the clergy. See Hazlitt's *Life of Napoleon*, chap. 15.
'*His own miniature-picture,*' *etc.* 'On my own Miniature Picture' (1796).

## THE SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED

306. '*Give us pause.*' *Hamlet*, Act III. Sc. 1.
'*Does somewhat smack.*' Cf. *The Merchant of Venice*, Act II. Sc. 2.

307. *Peter Finnerty.* Peter Finnerty (1766?-1822) at one time on the staff of *The Morning Chronicle* with Hazlitt.

308. *J——.* Jeffrey.
'*In some sort handled.*' Cf. *Henry V.* Act II. Sc. 3.
'*The high and palmy state.*' Cf. *Hamlet*, Act I. Sc. 1.

309. '*Keep this dreadful pudder,*' *etc.* *King Lear*, Act III. Sc. 2.
'*When a great wheel,*' *etc.* Cf. *Ibid.* Act II. Sc. 4.

310. '*Will be,*' *etc.* Dr. Johnson, Preface to Shakespeare (*Works*, Oxford, 1825, vol. v., p. 118).

## ON PUBLIC OPINION

Published (together with the next essay) in *Winterslow.*

311. '*Scared,*' *etc.* Cf. Collins's Ode, *The Passions*, 20.
312. '*The world rings,*' *etc.* Cowper, *The Task*, III. 129-30.
313. '*No man knoweth,*' *etc.* Cf. *S. John* iii. 8.
314. '*Casting,*' *etc.* *Il Penseroso*, 160.
315. '*Wink,*' *etc.* Cf. Marston, *Antonio's Revenge*, Prologue.
'*Fed fat,*' *etc.* Cf. *The Merchant of Venice*, Act I. Sc. 3.

# NOTES

## ON THE CAUSES OF POPULAR OPINION

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Published (with preceding essay) in *Winterslow*.

316. *The Editors of the Edinburgh Encyclopædia.* *The Edinburgh Encyclopædia* (18 vols., 1810-30) was edited by Sir David Brewster.
'*Among the rocks*,' *etc.* Cf. *Michael*, 455-7.

317. '*A man of ten thousand.*' Cf. *Hamlet*, Act II. Sc. 2.

318. '*Who loved*,' *etc.* *Othello*, Act V. Sc. 2.

320. *J*——. Jeffrey.

## A FAREWELL TO ESSAY-WRITING

Republished in an imperfect form in *Winterslow*. In the Magazine the essay is dated 'Winterslow, Feb. 20, 1828.'

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321. '*This life is best*,' *etc.* *Cymbeline*, Act III. Sc. 3.
'*A friend*,' *etc.* Cf. Cowper, *Retirement*, 741-2.
'*Done its spiriting gently.*' Cf. *The Tempest*, Act I. Sc. 2.
'*The spring*,' *etc.* Coleridge, *Christabel*, 22.
'*Fields are dank*,' *etc.* Milton's Sonnet (XX.), 'Lawrence, of virtuous father virtuous son.'

322. '*Peep*,' *etc.* Cf. *Macbeth*, Act I. Sc. 5.
'*Open*,' *etc.* Cowper, *The Task*, VI. 11-12.

323. '*Of all the cities*,' *etc.* Dryden, *Theodore and Honoria*, 1-2.
'*Which when Honoria view'd*,' *etc.* *Ibid.* 342-3.
'*And made th' insult*,' *etc.* Dryden, *Sigismonda and Guiscardo*, 668-9.
*I am much pleased, etc.* This sentence (to the end of the paragraph) was omitted in *Winterslow*.

324. '*Fall'n*,' *etc.* Scott, *Glenfinlas*, last stanza.
*Mr. Gifford once said, etc.* See vol. IV. (*The Spirit of the Age*) p. 307.
*I am rather disappointed, etc.* This sentence was omitted in *Winterslow*.

325. '*The admired*,' *etc.* Cf. *Hamlet*, Act III. Sc. 1.
*What I have here stated, etc.* This paragraph and the next two were omitted in *Winterslow*.
'*I know not seems.*' *Hamlet*, Act I. Sc. 2.

326. *L*——. Lamb, no doubt.
*Antonio.* Godwin's *Antonio* was produced at Drury Lane and damned Dec. 13, 1800.
'*Nor can I think*,' *etc.* Dryden, *The Hind and the Panther*, I. 315.

327. *Chaucer's Flower and Leaf.* See vol. V. (*Lectures on the English Poets*) p. 27 and note.
'*And ayen*,' *etc.* *The Flower and the Leaf*, St. 15.
*Mr. and Miss L*——. Charles and Mary Lamb.

328. '*And curtain close*,' *etc.* Cf. Collins's Ode, *On the Poetical Character*, 76.

## BYRON AND WORDSWORTH

Now republished for the first time. See Mr. W. C. Hazlitt's *Memoirs*, etc. I. xxix.

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328. *Lord Byron's haste, etc.* See Leigh Hunt's *Lord Byron and his Contemporaries*, I. 77.
'*A cure*,' *etc.* Cf. *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (*Select Works*, ed. Payne, II. 164).

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329. '*Ah! voilà*,' *etc.* *Confessions*, Part I. Liv. vi.
'*Slow*,' *etc.* Cf. *As You Like It*, Act II. Sc. 7.
Note. *Ada Reis; a Tale*, by Lady Caroline Lamb (1785-1828), published in 1823.

## ON CANT AND HYPOCRISY

This essay and the next were published with some omissions in *Sketches and Essays*.

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330. '*If to do*,' *etc.* *The Merchant of Venice*, Act I. Sc. 2.
*Curl.* Edmund Curll (1675-1747).
'*The spirit*,' *etc.* *S. Matthew* xxvi. 41.
331. '*Most easily*,' *etc.* Cf. *Hebrews* xii. 1.
*Video, etc.* Ovid, *Metam.*, VII. 20-1.
332. '*Duenna*.' See Act III. Sc. 5.
'*A little round*,' *etc.* *The Castle of Indolence*, I. St. 69.
333. *Lord Shaftesbury.* See *Characteristicks*, An Inquiry concerning Virtue, or Merit, Part I. Sect. II.
'*Upon this bank*,' *etc.* *Macbeth*, Act I. Sc. 7.
335. '*Mighty coil*,' *etc.* Cf. *King Lear*, Act III. Sc. 2.

## THE SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED

337. '*Eremites*,' *etc.* *Paradise Lost*, III. 474-5.
338. '*Cant religious*,' *etc.* See Byron's Letter to Murray on Bowles's Strictures on the Life and Writings of Pope. *Letters*, etc., ed. Prothero, v. 536.
339. *Mr. Coleridge, etc.* Nearly the whole of this passage from this point to the end was omitted in *Sketches and Essays*. In the Magazine the essay concludes with the words '*Cetera desunt*.'
*Mr. Liberal Snake.* See Disraeli's *Vivian Grey*.

## POETRY

Now republished for the first time. Some of the essays now first republished from *The Atlas* are identified as Hazlitt's in Mr. W. C. Hazlitt's *Memoirs*, etc. (see I. xxix. and xxx.). The others have been included on the strength of the internal evidence of authorship. A short paper, attributed to Hazlitt by Mr. W. C. Hazlitt (*Memoirs*, I. xxix.), and entitled 'Richesse de la Langue,' had appeared in *The Atlas* for Jan. 25, 1829. It runs as follows :—

> 'How should one convey by a single word an expression of face which having arisen from some strong passion, uneasiness or emotion, is converted into an habitual character, and remains without any immediate object to excite it? In the English language there are above thirty ways of doing this, or else approaching to, and hovering round the point. As for instance, we may express this look by the following epithets, more or less pointedly, and with various inflections of meaning attached to them :—*wild, scared, startled, haggard, harassed, hunted, nervous, agitated, apprehensive, terrified, dismayed, abstracted, stunned, panick-struck, odd, strange, wayward, flighty, uncouth, unaccountable, eccentric, embarrassed, unsettled, uneasy, over-conscious, morbid, careworn, blighted, scare-crow, hang-dog, ghastly, wilful,*

*dogged, staring, fierce, etc.* All these come tolerably near the mark, and differ from each other; yet none of them is the very word that is wanted to express the thing in question, though we have no doubt there is such a word in the English language, and that it might be suggested by some one who has a greater command of its resources. The above remarks may serve to guard the student of English, whether a foreigner or merely a stranger to his native tongue, against unmeaning *synonymes* or monotonous commonplace.'

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339. '*Daffodils*,' *etc.* *A Winter's Tale*, Act IV. Sc. 4.
340. '*That fine madness*,' *etc.* Cf. Drayton, Elegy, *To Henry Reynolds, Esq.*
341. '*Cowslips wan*,' *etc.* *Lycidas*, 147.
*Lowly children, etc.* Cf. 'With all the lowly children of the shade.' Thomson, *The Seasons*, Spring, 450.
342. '*To elevate and surprise.*' The Duke of Buckingham, *The Rehearsal*, Act I. Sc. 1.

## ENGLISH GRAMMAR

Now republished for the first time. Cf. vol. IV. pp. 231 *et seq.* and 389 *et seq.*

'*Foregone conclusion.*' *Othello*, Act III. Sc. 3.
343. '*A man of Ind.*' Cf. *The Tempest*, Act II. Sc. 2.
'*Wise*,' *etc.* Cf. 1 *Corinthians* iv. 6.
344. *A standard book.* Lindley Murray's *English Grammar*, no doubt, the later editions of which were published by Longmans.
345. *Mr. Fearn.* Hazlitt's friend. *Anti-Tooke* was published in 1824. Cf. vol. VI. (*Table-Talk*), 63-4.
'*Still, small.*' 1 *Kings* xix. 12.

## MEMORABILIA OF MR. COLERIDGE

Now republished for the first time. Many of the opinions expressed are referred to by Hazlitt elsewhere.

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346. *Barrow.* Cf. *ante*, p. 266, where Hume is said to have borrowed from South.
347. '*More was meant*,' *etc.* Cf. *Il Penseroso*, 120.
348. *Dr. Dodd.* William Dodd (1729-1777), executed for forgery in 1777. His *Thoughts in Prison* appeared in the same year.

## PETER PINDAR

Now republished for the first time.

'*Men*,' *etc.* 2 *Henry IV.*, Act III. Sc. 2.
'*A manly man*,' *etc.* Chaucer, *The Canterbury Tales*, Prologue, 167.
349. '*Haloo*,' *etc.* Cf. 2 *Henry IV.*, Act I. Sc. 2.
*Viotti.* Giovanni Battista Viotti (1753-1824).
'*Making the worse*,' *etc.* *Paradise Lost*, II. 113-14.

# FUGITIVE WRITINGS

## LOGIC

Now republished for the first time.

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351. '*That which is*,' *etc.* Cf. *Twelfth Night*, Act IV. Sc. 2. The mistake of 'Cophetua' for 'Gorboduc' is made elsewhere by Hazlitt.

352. '*Over shoes, over boots.*' Cf. *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, Act I. Sc. 1.

## THE LATE MR. CURRAN

Now republished for the first time.

353. *The late shots at Edinburgh.* Hazlitt may refer to the conviction and execution (Jan. 28, 1829) of the notorious William Burke. His partner Hare had given evidence against him and had been released.

## THE COURT JOURNAL—A DIALOGUE

Now republished for the first time. The *Court Journal* was a weekly paper founded by Henry Colburn, May 2, 1829.

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355. '*Our withers*,' *etc.* *Hamlet*, Act III. Sc. 2.
'*Married a highwayman*,' *etc.* *The Beggar's Opera*, I. 1.
'*The story of Miss ——*,' *etc.* Cf. vol. XI. (*Fugitive Writings*), p. 383 note.

356. *Mr. C——.* Henry Colburn presumably.

## THE LATE DR. PRIESTLEY

Now republished for the first time.

357. '*His body thought.*' Cf. Donne, *An Anatomy of the World*, The Second Anniversary, 245-6.

358. *Controversy with Dr. Price.* Published in 1778.
'*Dazzling*,' *etc.* Cf. *Comus*, 791.

359. '*Anthropagi*,' *etc.* Cf. *Othello*, Act I. Sc. 3.
'*Nay, an you mouth*,' *etc.* Cf. *Hamlet*, Act V. Sc. 1.
'*None but a Cobbett*,' *etc.* See Cobbett's *Observations on Priestley's Emigration* (*Selections*, *etc.* I. 15, *et seq.*).

## SECTS AND PARTIES

Now republished for the first time.

361. *A board of Utility at Charing Cross.* Hazlitt may have had in his mind Francis Place, the radical tailor of Charing Cross, whose house was well known as a Radical meeting-place, but the essay attacks the Utilitarian party at large.

362. *Mrs. Chatterley.* The wife of the actor William Simmonds Chatterley. It is difficult to understand what Hazlitt's innuendo is. The journal he refers to is presumably the *Morning Chronicle*.

363. '*What they are least assured.*' Cf. *Measure for Measure*, Act II. Sc. 2.

# NOTES

## CONVERSATIONS AS GOOD AS REAL (1)

These two papers, now republished for the first time, were omitted for some reason by Hazlitt when he brought out *Mr. Northcote's Conversations*. See vol. VI. note to p. 420. T. is Hazlitt, J., Northcote. This first Conversation would have followed after Conversation the Twentieth. See for Hogarth, vol. VIII. (*English Comic Writers*) 133 *et seq.*, and Lamb's essay 'On the Genius and Character of Hogarth' (*Works*, ed. E. V. Lucas, I. 70).

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364. *That old Mother W.* It is not clear to what figure Northcote refers. The procuress in *The Harlot's Progress* (Plate I.) was the notorious Mother Needham who died in 1731.
*Fielding has tried, etc.* *Tom Jones*, Book IV. chap. ii.
*That remark of his.* Cf. *ante*, p. 268, and vol. VIII. p. 442.
'*With her pie-dish*,' *etc.* Hazlitt's phrase. See vol. VIII. p. 137.
367. *The* '*Possessed Boy*.' A fresco in the chapel of San Nilo, Grotta Ferrata. The drawing from this fresco was presumably by John Bryant Lane (1788-1868), who spent ten years in Rome (1817-1827).
*The late Edinburgh murders.* See *ante*, p. 353 and note.
*The group at Ambrose's.* See Wilson's *Noctes Ambrosianæ*.
368. *One of his tales.* Crabbe's tale 'The Confidant,' upon which Lamb founded *The Wife's Trial; or, the Intruding Widow*, published in *Blackwood*, 1828.
*Tam O'Shanter.* Statues of Tam O'Shanter and Souter Johnny, by Thoms, were exhibited in London in 1829.
*Ducrow.* Andrew Ducrow (1793-1842), the equestrian performer.

## CONVERSATIONS AS GOOD AS REAL (2)

369. *G.* Godwin, probably.
370. *A classical education.* Cf. vol. I. (*The Round Table*), p. 5 and note.

## TRIFLES LIGHT AS AIR

Republished by Mr. W. C. Hazlitt in his edition of *The Round Table* (Bohn, 1871). Nos. I.-X. appeared in *The Atlas* on Sept. 27, 1829; Nos. XI.-XVII. on Oct. 4, 1829. The following additional 'Trifle' (XVIII.) appeared in Bohn's Library, though not in the Magazine: 'The French Revolutionists in the "Reign of Terror," with Robespierre at their head, made one grand mistake. They really thought that by getting rid of the patrons and abettors of the ancient *régime* they should put an end to the breed of tyrants and slaves; whereas in order to do this it would be necessary to put an end to the whole human race.'

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372. *It was merely a fashion, etc.* See Byron's letter to Murray on Bowles and Pope (*Letters, etc.*, ed. Prothero, V. 553 and note).
'*Procrastination*,' *etc.* Young, *Night Thoughts*, I. 393.
375. '*Ears polite*.' Pope, *Moral Essays*, IV. 150.
'*Inconstant moon*.' *Romeo and Juliet*, II. 2.

# FUGITIVE WRITINGS

## COMMON SENSE

Now republished for the first time.

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377. '*Its price*,' *etc.* Cf. *Job* xxviii. 18.
'*Fairly worth the seven.*' Pope, *Moral Essays*, iv. 44.
'*Comes home*,' *etc.* Bacon, *Essays*, Dedication.

378. '*Fear*,' *etc.* Cowper, *The Task*, ii. 325.
*Commodore Trunnion, etc.* See *Peregrine Pickle*, Chap. viii.

379. '*They have*,' *etc.* Cf. *Julius Cæsar*, Act ii. Sc. 1.

380. '*Crack*,' *etc.* 'The father cracks of horses, pleughs, and kye.' Burns, *Cotter's Saturday Night*, St. viii.
*Phlegmatic C——.* Hazlitt probably refers to Cobbett. Cf. a passage in *Table-Talk* (vol. vi. p. 102).

## THE SPIRIT OF CONTROVERSY

Now republished for the first time.

381. '*Envy*,' *etc.* Cf. 'From envy, hatred, and malice, and all uncharitableness.' *The Litany.*

383. '*Root of the matter.*' *Job* xix. 28.
'*Their hearts*,' *etc.* Cf. *S. Luke* xxiv. 32.
'*A coil and pudder.*' See *ante*, notes to pp. 309 and 335.
*Mr. Taylor's discourses.* Robert Taylor (1784-1844), the notorious deistical clergyman, who, early in 1828, had been sentenced to a year's imprisonment for a blasphemous discourse.
*The Duke of Newcastle.* The fourth Duke (1785-1851), a violent opponent of Catholic Emancipation passed by Wellington's ministry in 1829.
'*Strange*,' *etc.* Byrom, *On the Feuds between Handel and Bononcini.*

384. '*Like a thick scurf*,' *etc.* See *ante*, note to p. 82.
'*Whose edge*,' *etc.* *Cymbeline*, Act iii. Sc. 4.
'*Of whatsoe'er descent*,' *etc.* Dryden, *Absalom and Achitophel*, i. 100-3.

## ENVY

Republished in *Sketches and Essays.*

387. '*Jealous leer malign.*' *Paradise Lost*, iv. 503.

388. '*Phœnix*,' *etc.* *Ibid.* v. 272.
'*Though wondering senates*,' *etc.* Pope, *Moral Essays*, i. 184-7.

390. '*Like to a gate*,' *etc.* Cf. *Troilus and Cressida*, Act iii. Sc. 3.

391. '*The learned pate*,' *etc.* *Timon of Athens*, Act iv. Sc. 3.

## ON PREJUDICE

This and the two following essays were published together in *Sketches and Essays.*

392. '*God's image*,' *etc.* Fuller, *The Holy State*, ii. 20, 'The Good Sea-Captain.'
*Mr. Murray no longer libels men of colour.* In *Sketches and Essays* these words were changed to 'men of colour are no longer to be libelled.'

393. '*That one*,' *etc.* Cf. *Othello*, Act v. Sc. 2.

## THE SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED

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395. '*Most ignorant*,' *etc.* Cf. *Measure for Measure*, Act II. Sc. 2.
'*Cherish*,' *etc.* *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (*Select Works*, ed. Payne, II. 102).
'*Rings the earth*,' *etc.* Cf. Cowper, *The Task*, III. 129-30.

396. '*Murder to dissect.*' Wordsworth, *The Tables Turned*, l. 28.

## THE SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED

This essay, which does not seem to have been published in *The Atlas*, is printed from *Sketches and Essays*.

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396. '*Reason*,' *etc.* Cf. 1 *Peter* iii. 15.

398. '*There is nothing*,' *etc.* Cf. vol. VIII. (*English Comic Writers*) p. 124 and note.

400. '*Thus shall we*,' *etc.* Cf. 1 *John* iv. 1.
'*Comes home*,' *etc.* Bacon, *Essays*, Dedication.
'*Still, small voice.*' 1 *Kings* xix. 12.

## ON PARTY SPIRIT

Published in *Winterslow*.

402. '*The salt of the earth.*' *S. Matthew* v. 13.
'*Cuts*,' *etc.* Cf. Cowper, *The Task*, III. 208-9.
'*The sentiment*,' *etc.* Cf. *ante*, p. 218 and note.

## PROJECT FOR A NEW THEORY, ETC.

This essay was published in *Literary Remains*, and again, more fully, in *Winterslow*, where it is dated 1828. It may possibly have been printed in *The Atlas* for 1829, a complete file of which the Editors have not been able to find. The essay is here printed from *Winterslow*. See Mr. W. C. Hazlitt's *Memoirs* (1867), I. 24 *et seq.*

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405. *Mr. Currie.* This should apparently be Corrie. See *Memoirs*, I. 25.
*The Test and Corporation Acts.* Repealed in 1828.

409. '*I am monarch*,' *etc.* Cowper, *Verses supposed to be written by Alexander Selkirk.*
'*Founded as the rock.*' *Macbeth*, Act III. Sc. 4.

410. *Mr. Burke talks, etc.* Hazlitt seems to refer to Burke's Essay, *On the Sublime and Beautiful*, Part IV. § 25.

411. '*There's no divinity*,' *etc.* Cf. *Hamlet*, Act IV. Sc. 5.

412. *Essay on Wages. An Essay on the Circumstances which determine the Rate of Wages, etc.* (1826).
'*Throw your bread*,' *etc.* Cf. *Ecclesiastes* xi. 1.

413. '*While this machine*,' *etc.* *Hamlet*, Act II. Sc. 2.

419. '*Like the wild goose*,' *etc.* *As You Like It*, Act II. Sc. 7.

# FUGITIVE WRITINGS

## ON THE CONDUCT OF LIFE, ETC.

Published in *Literary Remains*, from which it is here reprinted. See Mr. W. C. Hazlitt's *Memoirs* (1867), I. 16, where the date of the essay is fixed as 1822, when Hazlitt's son was ten years old.

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425. '*The salt of the earth.*' *S. Matthew* v. 13.
'*According to your own dignity,*' *etc.* Cf. *Hamlet*, Act II. Sc. 2.
428. '*How shall we part,*' *etc.* Cf. *Paradise Lost*, XI. 282-5.
'*The study of the Classics,*' *etc.* See vol. I. (*The Round Table*) p. 4 and notes.
431. '*Practique,*' *etc.* *Henry V.*, Act I. Sc. 1.
435. '*We hunt the wind,*' *etc.* See *Don Quixote*, Part I. Book II. chap. xiii.
'*Quit, quit,*' *etc.* Cf. Suckling's Song, 'Why so pale and wan, fond lover?'
436. '*When on the yellow,*' *etc.* Coleridge, *Love*, St. 16.
437. '*Nods and winks,*' *etc.* Cf. *L'Allegro*, 28.
439. '*Paled,*' *etc.* Cf. *Hamlet*, Act I. Sc. 5.

## BELIEF, WHETHER VOLUNTARY?

Published in *Literary Remains* (from which it is here printed) and in *Winterslow*.
'*Thy wish,*' *etc.* 2 *Henry IV.*, Act IV. Sc. 5.
Note. Cf. *ante*, p. 317.
441. '*Blown about,*' *etc.* Cf. *Ephesians* iv. 14.
'*Infinite agitation of wit.*' Bacon, *The Advancement of Learning*, Book I. iv. 5.
*Sir Isaac Newton, etc.* Newton published *Observations on the Prophecies of Daniel and the Apocalypse of St. John* (1733), and Napier of Merchiston *A Plaine Discovery of the whole Revelation of St. John* (1594).
442. '*Masterless passion,*' *etc.* Cf. *The Merchant of Venice*, Act IV. Sc. 1.
'*Fear,*' *etc.* *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Act V. Sc. 1.
443. *January and May.* See Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, 'The Merchant's Tale.'
444. *A good remark in 'Vivian Grey.'* See Book IV. chap. v.

## DEFINITION OF WIT

Published in *Literary Remains* from which it is here reprinted. Cf. the essay 'On Wit and Humour' in vol. VIII. (*English Comic Writers*) pp. 5-30.

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445. '*Wherein,*' *etc.* See vol. VIII. pp. 18-19.
'*The squandering glances,*' *etc.* *As You Like it*, Act II. Sc. 7.
446. '*Revive,*' *etc.* Quoted elsewhere from Scott.
448. '*Foregone conclusion.*' *Othello*, Act III. Sc. 3.
'*Skin,*' *etc.* Cf. *Hamlet*, Act III. Sc. 4.
449. '*In cut and dye,*' *etc.* *Hudibras*, I. I. 243-4.
'*The house,*' *etc.* Misquoted from Swift's *Vanbrugh's House.*
450. '*Turned from black to red.*' *Hudibras*, II. II. 32.
'*Like jewels,*' *etc.* Collins, Ode, *The Manners*, 55.
451. '*Pray lend me,*' *etc.* Farquhar, *The Beaux Stratagem*, Act V. Sc. 4.
453. '*A forked radish.*' 2 *Henry IV.*, Act III. Sc. 2.

# NOTES

## PERSONAL POLITICS

Published in *Literary Remains*, where the author's son says that it was 'written during my father's last illness, immediately after the French Revolution of 1830.' The essay, which must have been written after the 'Three Days' (see *post*, p. 461, note) is here reprinted from *Literary Remains*.

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456. '*Ay, every inch a King!*' *King Lear*, Act IV. Sc. 6.
'*Cooped*,' *etc.* Cf. *Macbeth*, Act III. Sc. 4.
'*Himself again.*' *Richard III.* (Cibber's version), Act V. Sc. 3.
458. '*Solely*,' *etc.* *Macbeth*, Act I. Sc. 5.
'*Shall be in him*,' *etc.* Cf. *Othello*, Act III. Sc. 3.
459. '*Smile, etc.* Cf. *Hamlet*, Act I. Sc. 5.
'*Ever strong*,' *etc.* *King John*, Act III. Sc. 1.
460. *The late King.* George IV. died on June 26, 1830.
461. *Let him go where he chooses.* Charles X. arrived in England on Aug. 17, 1830.
Note. *The Revolution of the Three Days.* This began on July 27, 1830.

## EMANCIPATION OF THE JEWS

This paper was printed in Leigh Hunt's *The Tatler* for March, 1831 (vol. II.), and also, separately, in pamphlet form. Mr. Bertram Dobell kindly showed to the Editors a copy of this pamphlet in his possession which bore the following (anonymous) marginal note: 'Written by Hazlitt, and a little altered by Mr. Basil Montagu—Mr. Isaac Goldsmid caused this little tract to be written, and defrayed all the expenses of authorship, printing, etc. It was the last production, I think, of Hazlitt's pen.' From a proof in the Editors' possession it is clear that the essay was sent by Hazlitt's son to *The Daily News* and set up in type in 1849, but it seems never to have been published by that journal. The essay is here reprinted from the pamphlet. *The Tatler* and *The Daily News* proof show only trifling typographical variations. It will be remembered that Macaulay's maiden speech (April 5, 1830) was in favour of a bill for the removal of Jewish disabilities. The emancipation of the Jews was not effected till 1858.

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461. '*We have reformed*,' *etc.* Cf. Hamlet, Act III. Sc. 2.
463. '*My kingdom*,' *etc.* *S. John* xviii. 36.
464. '*And pure religion*,' *etc.* Wordsworth, Sonnet, *Written in London, September 1802.*

## ON THE PUNISHMENT OF DEATH

*Fraser's Magazine* for January 1831 contains an article on Capital Punishment in which the author introduces an extract from an essay by Hazlitt on the same subject. The extract is thus introduced: 'It forms part of an essay which was written a few years ago by the late W. Hazlitt, at the request of a society then existing in London for obtaining a repeal of that formidable law, and seems to contain pretty much the sum of what might be brought forward against that punishment by a philosophical reasoner. It has never yet been published.'

Hazlitt's essay has not been discovered, and this rather obscure fragment is reprinted from *Fraser's Magazine*.

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466. *Beccaria.* Cesare, Marchese de Beccaria (1735?-1794), whose famous work, *On Crimes and Punishments*, appeared in 1764.
'*It is not the intensity*,' *etc.* Cf. Beccaria, chap. xxviii.
'*Crimes are more effectually prevented*,' *etc.* *Ibid.* chap. xxvii.

470. *In Mr. Bentham's phrase.* See (e.g) *Theory of Legislation*, Part III. chap. vi. Note. For Burgh's book see vol. iv. (*Reply to Malthus*), p. 85 *et seq.* and notes.

## ADDENDA TO THE NOTES IN VOLS. I.-XI.

### VOL. I.

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3. *The miser* '*robs himself*,' *etc.* Cf. *Joseph Andrews*, Book iv. chap. vii.
23. '*Because on earth*,' *etc.* See vol. x., note to p. 63.
52. '*A mistress*,' *etc.* Goldsmith, *The Traveller*, 152.
57. '*Pure*,' *etc.* Dryden, *Persius*, Sat. ii. l. 133.
68. '*Two happy things*,' *etc.* *The Tatler* (No. 40) quotes the epigram thus:

> 'In marriage are two happy things allowed,
> A wife in wedding-sheets, and in a shroud.
> How can a marriage state then be accursed,
> Since the last day's as happy as the first?'

85. '*Painting was jealous*,' *etc.* Vasari records a similar saying (*Lives*, ed. Blashfield and Hopkins, 1897, vol. iv. p. 218).
105. '*In that first garden*,' *etc.* Cf. 'In that first garden of our simpleness.' Daniel, *Hymen's Triumph*, i. 1.
112. '*And visions*,' *etc.* This couplet, a favourite quotation of Hazlitt's, occurs in a letter from Gray to Horace Walpole (*Letters*, ed. Tovey, i. 7-8). The lines are apparently a translation (by Gray) of Virgil, *Æneid*, vi. 282-84.
135. '*Heaves no sigh*,' *etc.* See vol. v., note to p. 30.
139. *The new Patent Blacking.* Cf. Moore's *Parody of a Celebrated Letter*, 94-6.
391. '*The word*,' *etc.* Cf. 2 *Henry IV.*, iii. 2.
292. '*Go, go*,' *etc.* Cf. Wycherley, *The Plain Dealer*, v. 1.
427. *Turnspit of the King's kitchen.* See vol. xii. (*Fugitive Writings*), p. 291 and note.

### VOL. II.

310. '*Both living and loving*.' Lamb's version of Thekla's Song in *The Piccolomini*. See Coleridge's *Poetical Works*, ed. J. D. Campbell, p. 648.
311. '*Winged wound*.' Dryden, *The Hind and the Panther*, i. 6.
347. '*Who had been beguiled*,' *etc.* Leigh Hunt, *The Story of Rimini*, Canto iii.
363. '*Throws a cruel sunshine on a fool*.' Armstrong, *The Art of Preserving Health*, Book iv.
396. *The man who bought Punch.* See vol. xii. p. 353.

# ADDENDA TO NOTES

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## VOL. III.

38. *The Room over the way.* See Cobbett's *Weekly Political Register*, Sept. 1817 (*Selections, etc.*, v. 259).
41. *St. Peter is well at Rome.* *Don Quixote*, Part II. Book III. chap. xli., and elsewhere.
45. '*Lest the courtiers,*' *etc.* *The Beggar's Opera*, II. 2.
60. '*One note day and night.*' Burke, *Regicide Peace* (*Select Works*, ed. Payne, p. 51).
63. '*Which fear,*' *etc.* Cowper, *The Task*, II. 325.
166. '*In Philharmonia's undivided dale.*' Cf. 'O'er peaceful Freedom's undivided dale.' Coleridge, *Monody on the Death of Chatterton*, 140.
171. '*Unslacked of motion.*' See vol. IV. p. 42 and note.
174. '*Of whatsoever race,*' *etc.* Cf. Dryden, *Absalom and Achitophel*, I. 100-103.
239. '*Meek mouths ruminant.*' Cf. 'With ruminant meek mouths.' Leigh Hunt, *The Story of Rimini*, Canto II.
243. The Essay on 'The Effects of War and Taxes,' appeared also in The *New Scots Magazine* for Oct. 1818.
259. '*Soul-killing lies,*' *etc.* Lamb, *John Woodvil*, Act II.
268. '*Certain so wroth,*' *etc.* Chaucer, *Canterbury Tales*, The Prologue, 451-2.
273. '*People of the nicest imaginations,*' *etc.* Cf. Swift, *Thoughts on Various Subjects.*
284. '*Resemble the flies of a summer.*' Cf. 'Men would become little better than the flies of a summer.' Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (*Select Works*, ed. Payne, II. 112).
328. '*A new creation,*' *etc.* Goldsmith, *The Traveller*, 296.

## VOL. IV.

17. '*Sacro,*' *etc.* Quoted in the notes to Junius. See notes to Letter XXXVI.
24. *To elevate and surprise.* The Duke of Buckingham's *The Rehearsal*, I. 1.
44. '*Your very nice people,*' *etc.* See *ante*, note to vol. III. p. 273.
147. '*Where he picks clean teeth.*' Cowper, *The Task*, II. 627.
217. '*When he saw,*' *etc.* Coleridge, *Remorse*, Act IV. Sc. 2.
220. *Pingo in eternitatem.* A saying attributed to Zeuxis. See Sir Joshua Reynolds's *Discourses*, No. III.
311. '*Sithence no fairy lights,*' *etc.* See vol. XI. pp. 224, 268, and notes.

## VOL. V.

9. '*And visions, etc.* See *ante*, note to vol. I. p. 112.
10. '*Obscurity,*' *etc.* See vol. XI. p. 224 and note.
120. '*And that green wreath,*' *etc.* Southey, *Carmen Nuptiale*, Proem, St. 9.
215. '*A foot,*' *etc.* Cf. Donne, *The Storm*, 3-4.
277. *Friar Onion.* See Boccaccio, *The Decameron*, Sixth Day, Novel X.
280. '*That, like a trumpet,*' *etc.* Cf. Leigh Hunt, *The Story of Rimini*, Canto III.
345. '*The last of those fair clouds,*' *etc.* Cf. Wordsworth, *The Excursion*, VII. 1014-16.
372. For the note on Lord Dorset *read* Charles Sackville (1638-1706), sixth Earl of Dorset, author of 'To all you ladies now on land,' included with other songs in Hazlitt's *Select British Poets.*

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## VOL. VI.

23. '*Those suns and skies so pure.*' Warton, Sonnet (IX.) to the River Lodon.
93. '*The fair variety of things.*' Akenside, *Pleasures of the Imagination*, I. 78.
94. *A neighbouring Baronet.* See vol. XII., note to p. 202.
96. '*Like life and death,*' *etc.* Cf. Lamb, *John Woodvil*, Act II.
106. '*The beautiful is vanished,*' *etc.* Coleridge, *The Death of Wallenstein*, v. 1.
113. '*Like a faint shadow,*' *etc.* Cf. *The Faerie Queene*, II. vii. 29.
152. Note. '*The worst, the second fall of man.*' Cf. Windham, *Speeches*, I. 311 (March 13, 1797).
156. '*To warn and scare.*' Rev. Sneyd Davies, *To the Honourable and Reverend F. C.* (Dodsley, *Collection of Poems*, VI. 138).
189. '*The vine-covered hills,*' *etc.* William Roscoe, *Lines written in* 1788, parodied in *The Anti-Jacobin.*
211. '*Free from the Sirian star,*' *etc.* Beaumont and Fletcher, *Philaster*, Act v. Sc. 3.
218. '*It was out of all plumb,*' *etc.* *Tristram Shandy*, Book III. chap. xii.
225. '*Stud of night-mares.*' Cf. 'I confess an occasional night-mare; but I do not, as in early youth, keep a stud of them.' Lamb, *Essays of Elia* (Witches, and other Night-Fears).
243. '*Tall, opaque words.*' Hazlitt was perhaps quoting from himself. See vol. VIII. p. 257.
259. '*To angels 'twas most like.*' *The Flower and the Leaf*, St. 19.
308. '*Wild wit,*' *etc.* Gray, Ode, *On a Distant Prospect of Eton College.*
317. '*As much again to govern it.*' This line is not Butler's, but Pope's. See *An Essay on Criticism*, 80-81:

> 'There are whom heav'n has blest with store of wit,
> Yet want as much again to manage it.'

The couplet was changed in the 4to edition of 1743.

## VOL. VII.

189. '*Subtilised savages.*' 'Nor as yet have we subtilised ourselves into savages.' Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (*Select Works*, ed. Payne, II. 101).
273. '*As a saving of cheese-parings,*' *etc.* See Windham's *Speeches*, I. 311 (March 13, 1797).
282. '*As if they thrilled,*' *etc.* *The Faerie Queene*, II. xii. 78.

## VOL. VIII.

93. '*Not one of the angles,*' *etc.* *Tristram Shandy*, Book III. chap. xii.
164. '*Shines like Hesperus,*' *etc.* *The Faerie Queene*, I. vii. 30.
371. '*A singing face.*' *Bombastes Furioso*, Sc. 1.
437. '*Such were the joys,*' *etc.* Bickerstaffe, *Love in a Village*, II. 1.

## VOL. IX.

64. '*Play at bowls,*' *etc.* Hazlitt elsewhere quotes these words as from 'an old song.'
106. '*To dream and be an Emperour.*' Cf. 'I am like a man that dreamt he was an Emperour.' Fletcher, *The Spanish Curate*, II. 2.

# ADDENDA TO NOTES

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245. '*Perceive a fury*,' *etc.* Cf. *Othello*, IV. 2.
292. '*Retire, the world shut out*,' *etc.* Young, *Night Thoughts* (IX.).
429. *The Gods*, '*the children of Homer*.' Lucien Buonaparte, *Charlemagne*. See vol XI. (*Fugitive Writings*), p. 232.

## VOL. X.

187. '*Empurpling all the ground*.' Cf. *Lycidas*, 141.
208. '*Relegated to obscure cloisters*,' *etc.* Cf. Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (*Select Works*, ed. Payne, II. 121).
260. '*Yet his infelicity*,' *etc.* Cf. Webster, *The Duchess of Malfy*, Act IV. Sc. 2.
314. *The American Farmer's Letters*. *Letters from an American Farmer*, by Hector St. John Crevecœur (1731-1813), published 1794.
378. '*Hold our hands*,' *etc.* Cf. Dryden, *Alexander's Feast*, 72.

## VOL. XI.

277. '*I take her body*,' *etc.* These lines are not Suckling's, but from a song by Congreve, beginning 'Tell me no more I am deceived.'
336. '*Loud as a trumpet*,' *etc.* Dryden, *Palamon and Arcite*, III. 85.
338. '*Like importunate Guinea fowls*,' *etc.* Burke's *Regicide Peace* (ed. Payne, p. 51).
427 (and p. 501). '*Hymns its good god*,' *etc.* Cf. Thomson, *The Castle of Indolence*, I. x.
488. '*Each other's beams to share*.' Collins, Ode, *The Manners*, 56.

The following printer's errors may be noted :—

Vol. I. p. 436 (note to p. 142). Read *The Beggar's Opera*, Act I. Sc. 1.
Vol. II. p. 440 (note to p. 391). For *Huckman* read *Hackman*.
Vol. V. p. 391 (note to p. 97). Read *The Spirit of the Age*, vol. IV., etc.
Vol. V. p. 406 (note to p. 254). Read *Here be woods*.
Vol. V. p. 410 (note to p. 318). The words 'The Countess . . . in 1690' belong to the note above.
Vol. VI. p. 519 (note to p. 435). For 1870 *read* 1780.
Vol. IX. p. 458 (note to p. 247). *Read* Sir Martin Archer Shee.
Vol. IX. p. 463 (note to p. 317). For Mallard *read* Mallord.

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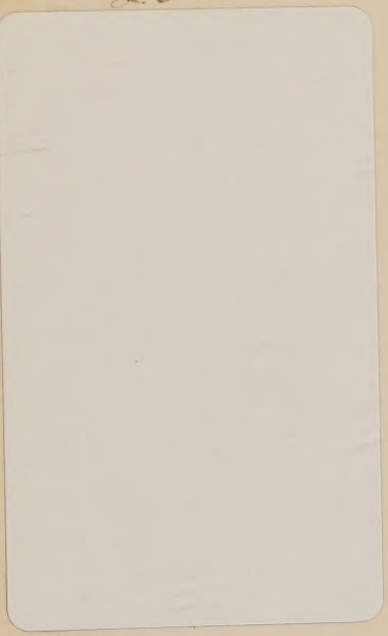

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